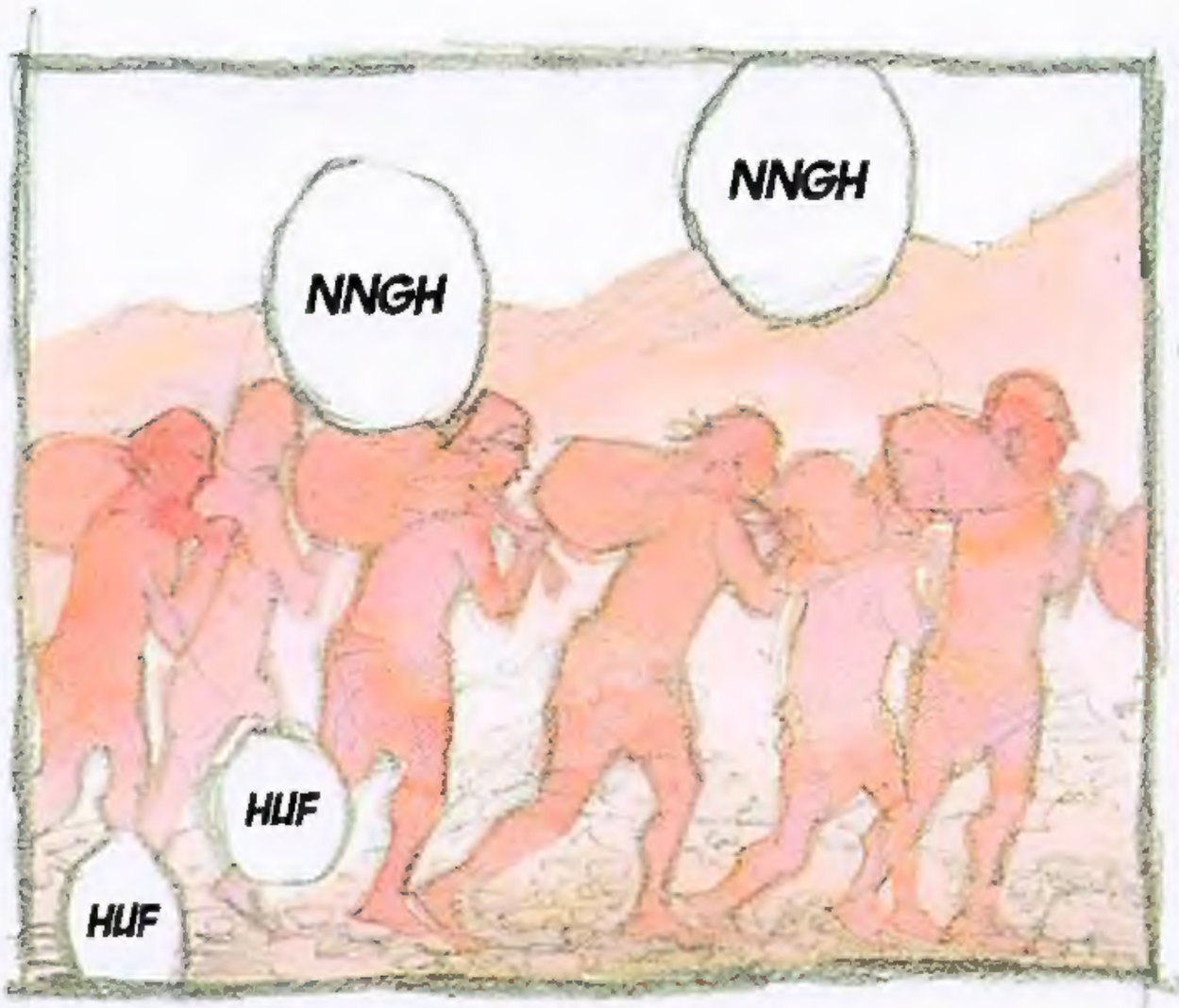
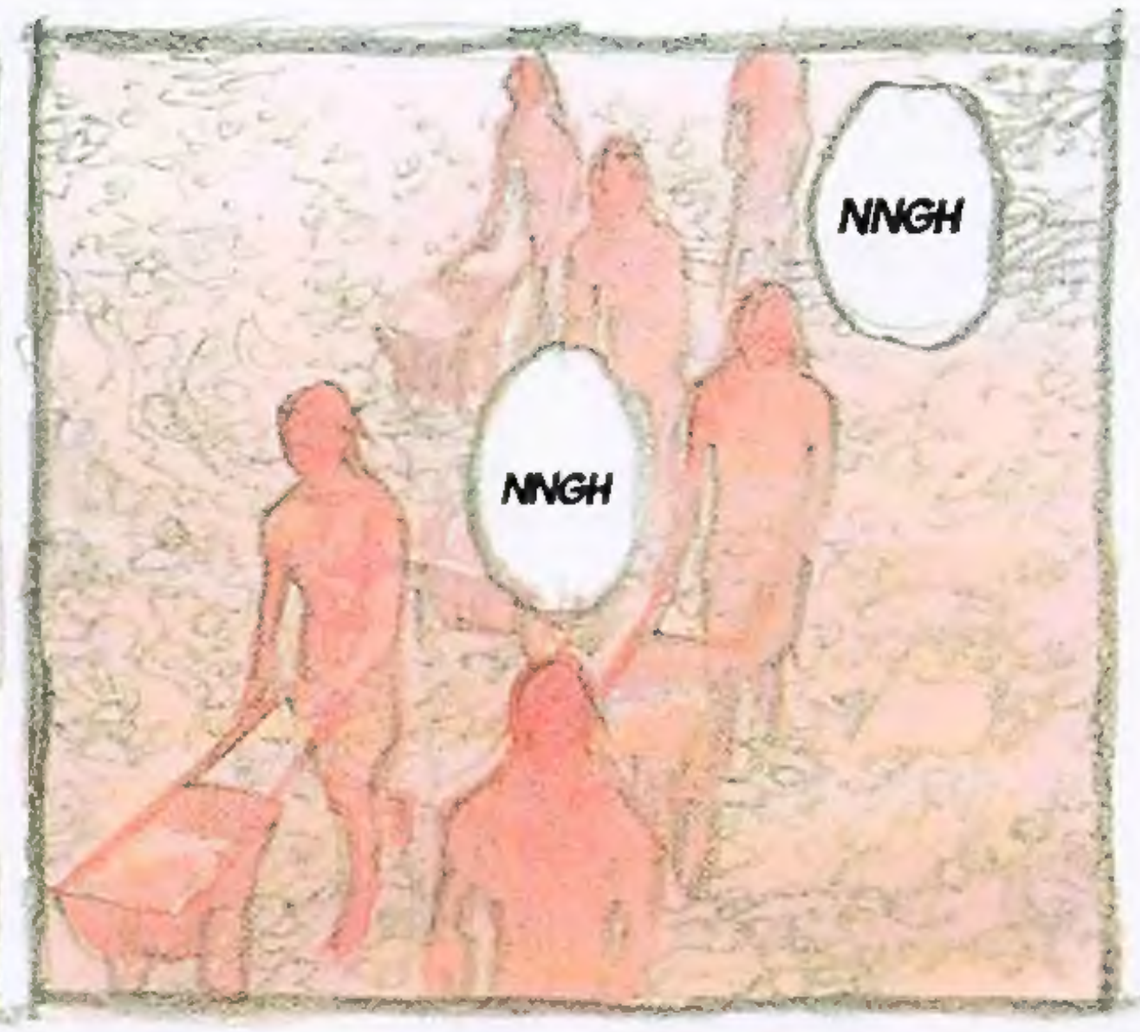
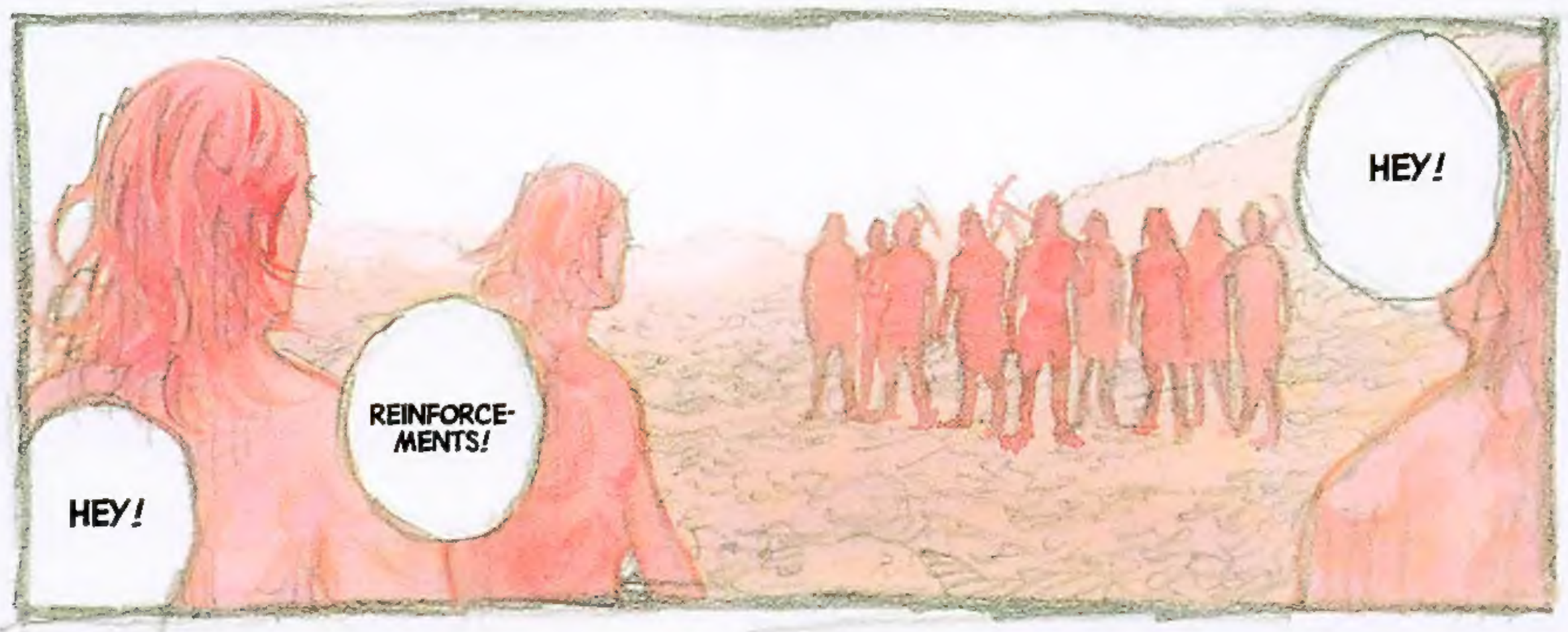
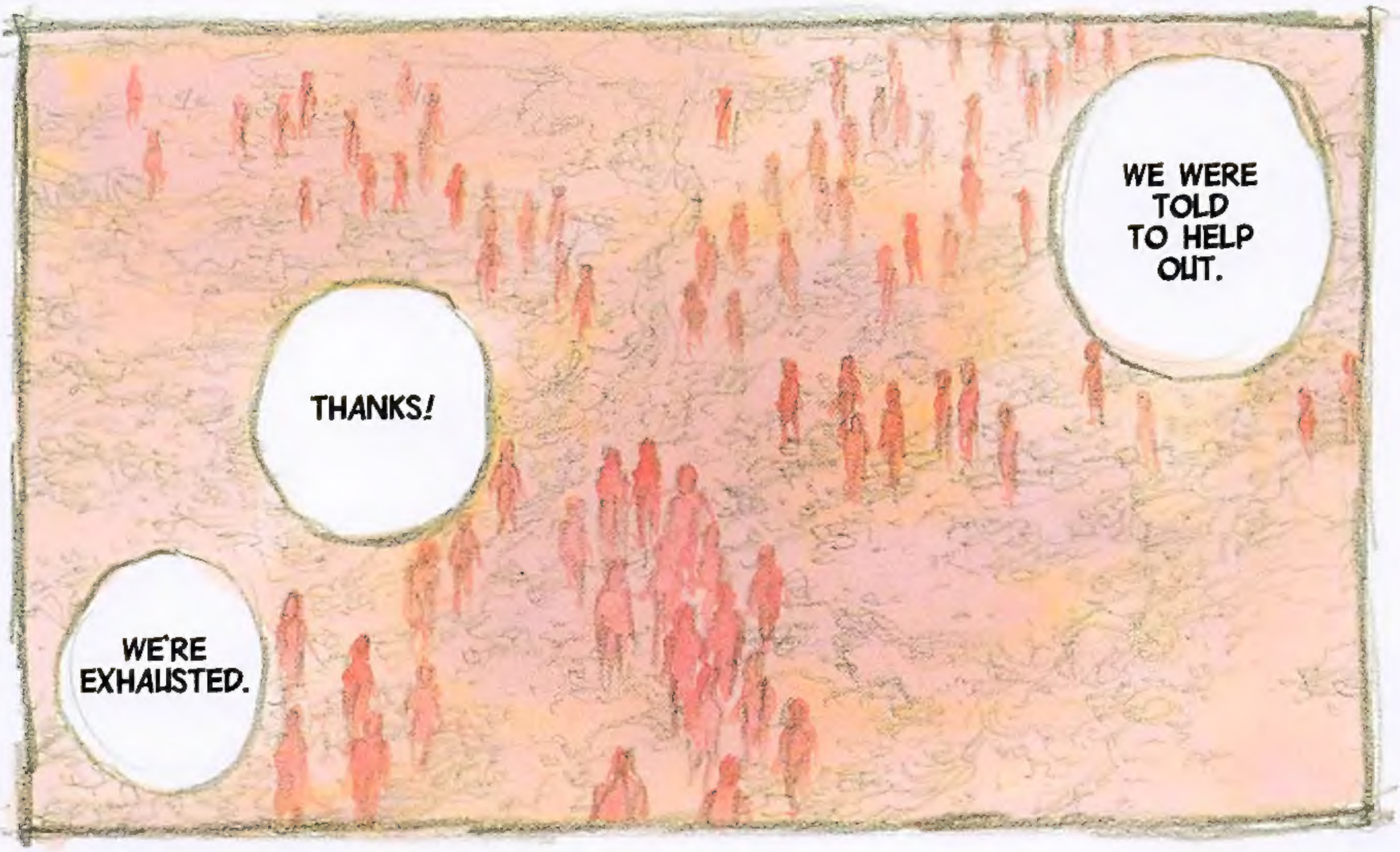
Vagabond
vol. 31

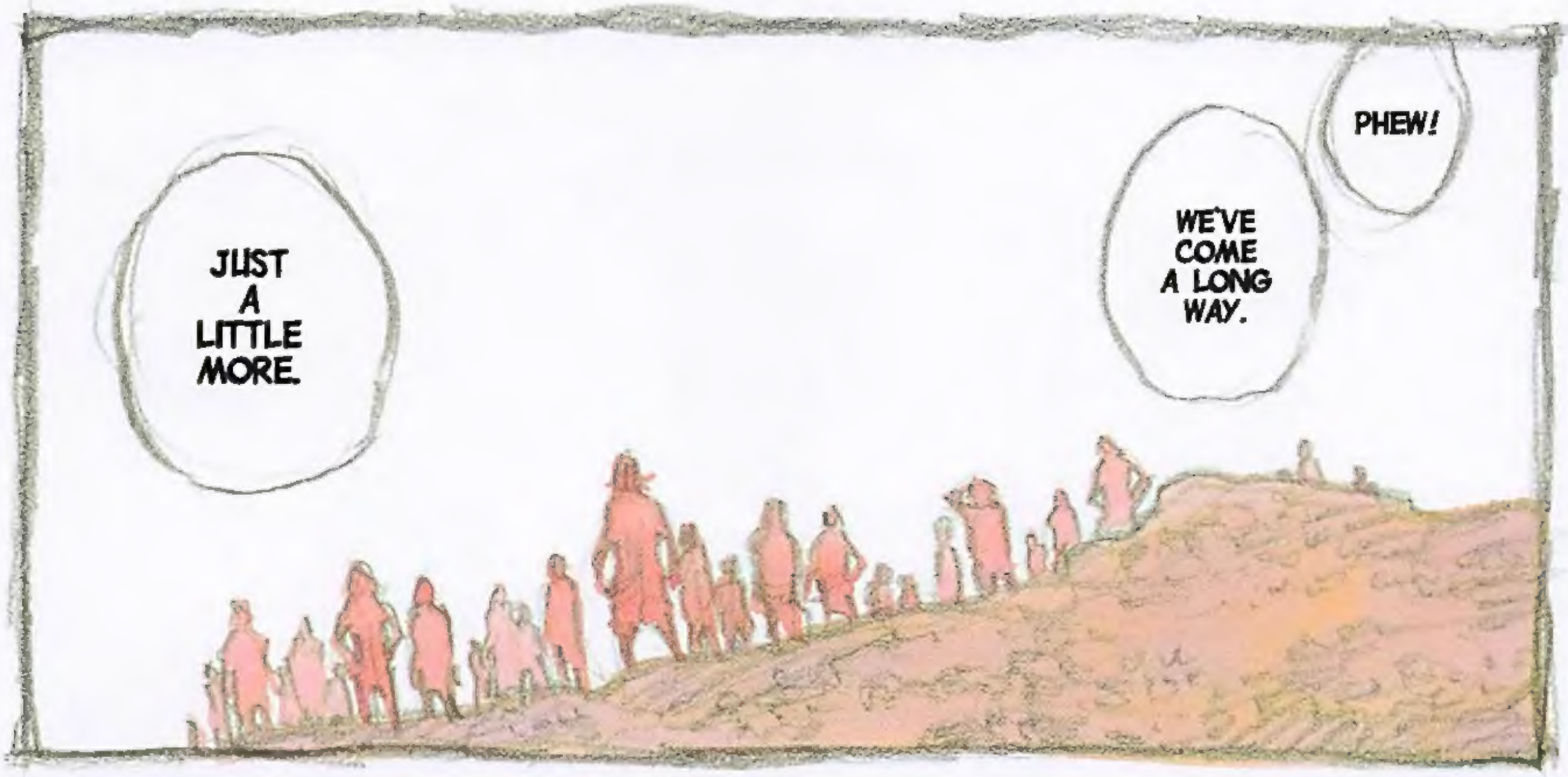

NNGH
NNGH
HUF
HUF

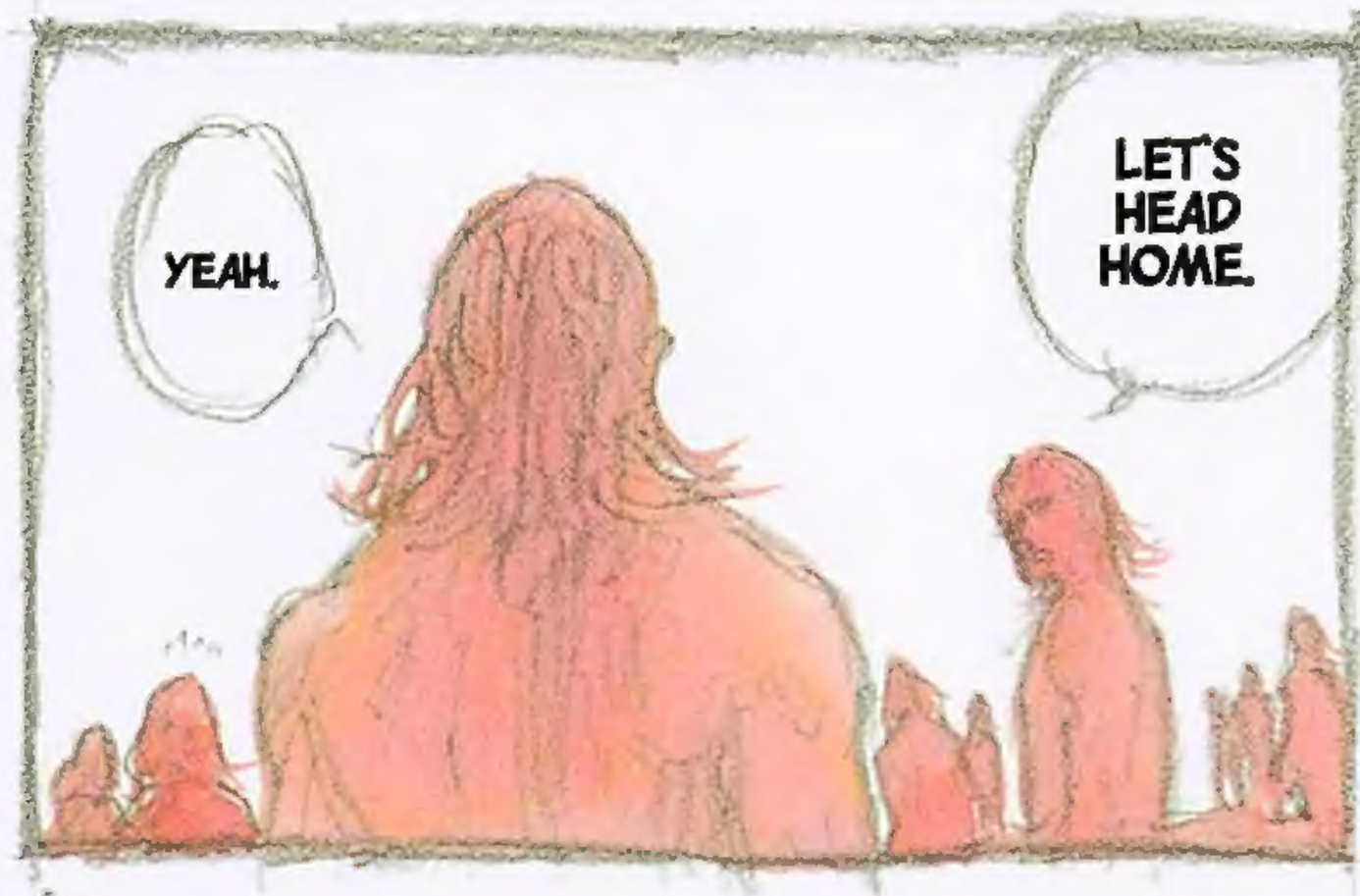

NNGH
NNGH


HEY!
REINFORCE-
MENTS!
HEY!

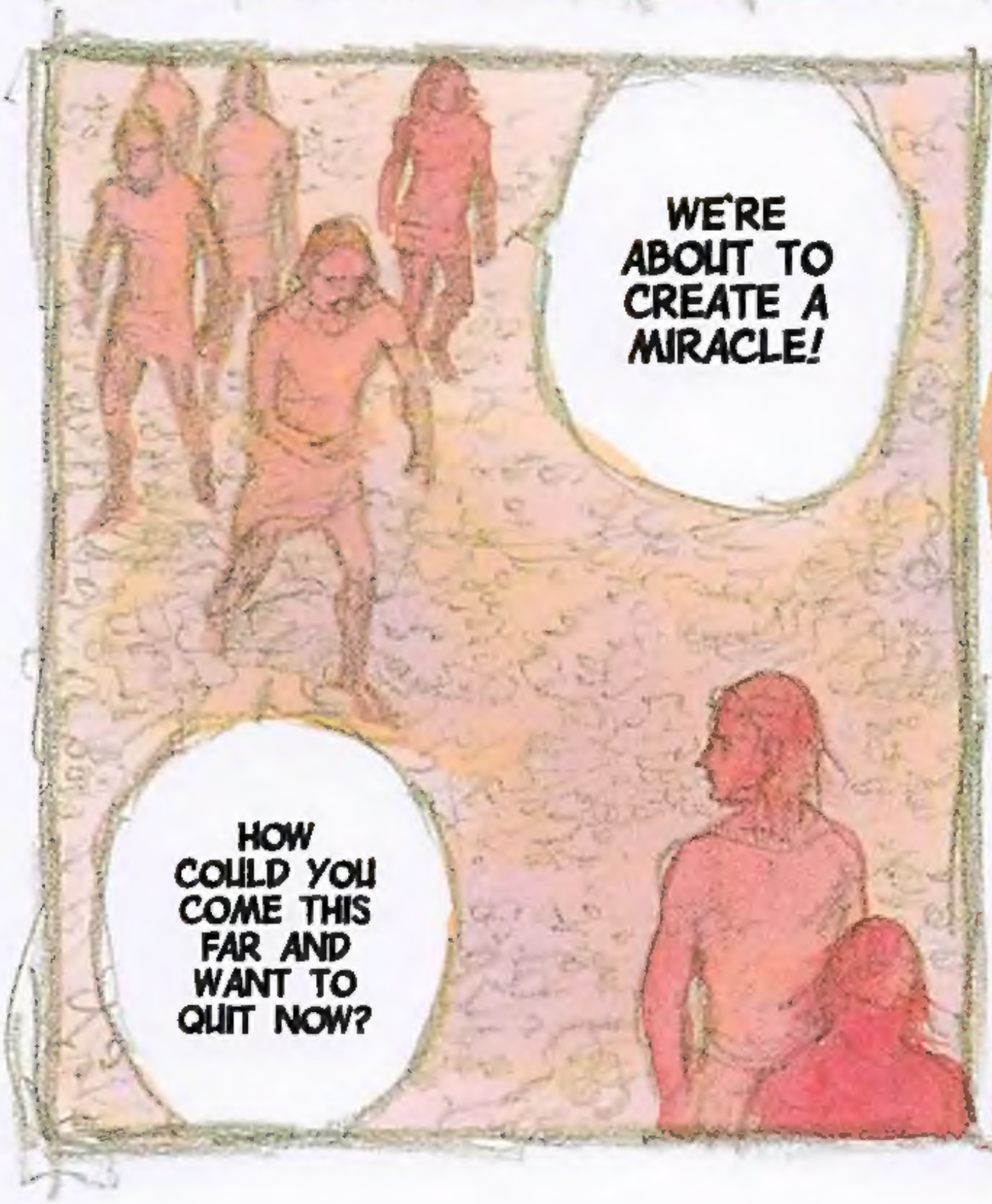

WE WERE
TOLD
TO HELP
OUT.
THANKS!
WE'RE
EXHAUSTED.

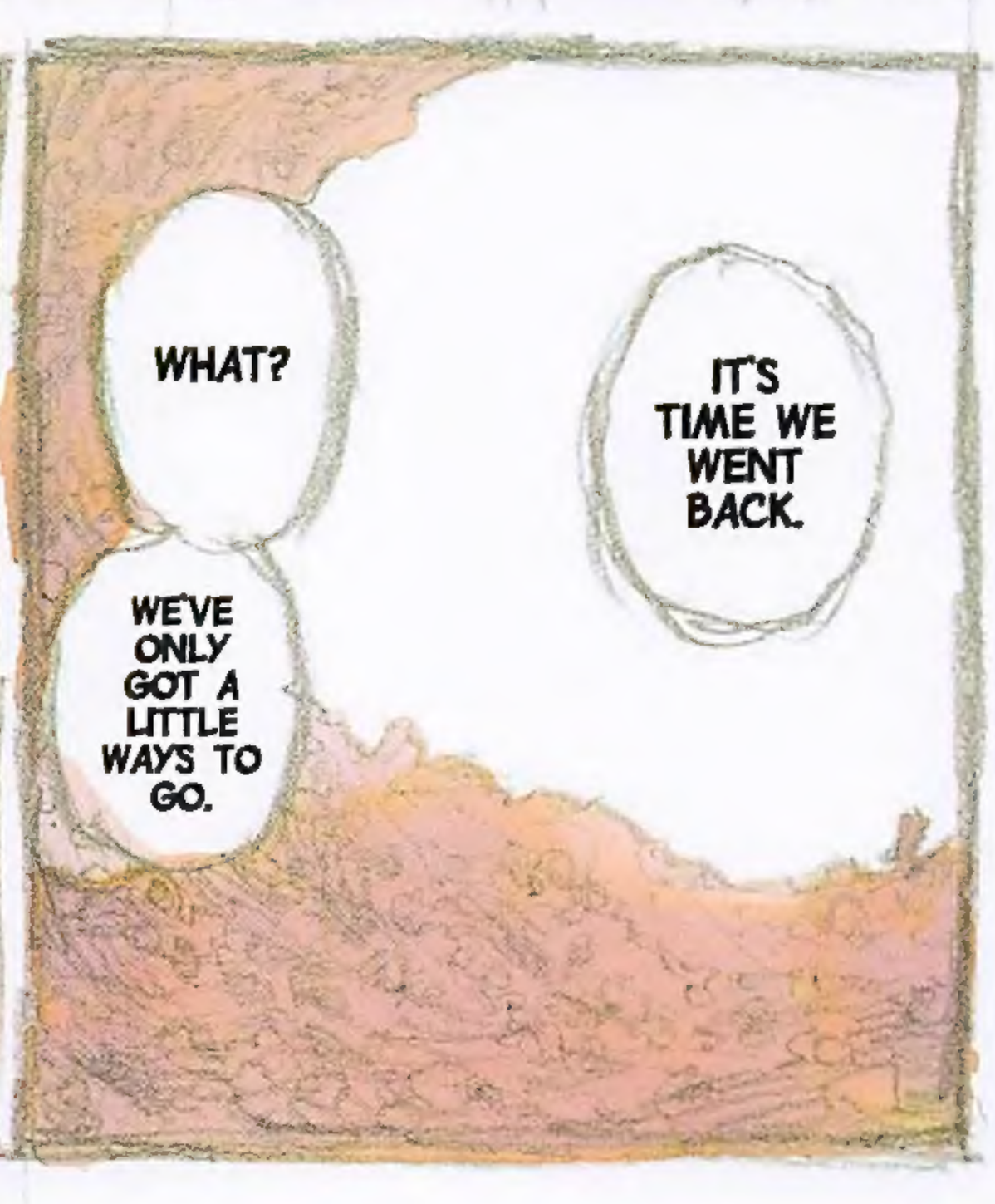
#270 | Drifter


JUST A LITTLE MORE.
WE'VE COME A LONG WAY.
PHEW!


YEAH.
LET'S HEAD HOME.

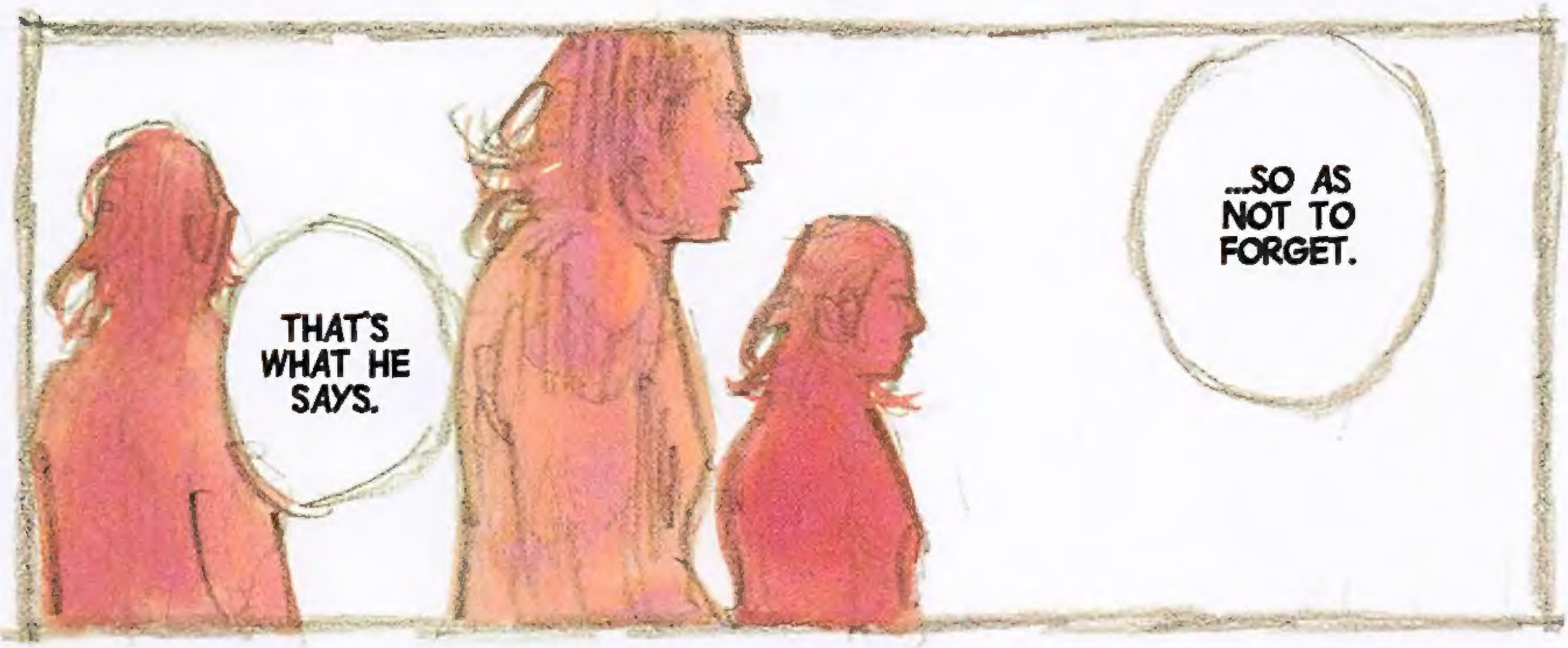
...


WE'RE ABOUT TO CREATE A MIRACLE!
HOW COULD YOU COME THIS FAR AND WANT TO QUIT NOW?


WHAT?
IT'S TIME WE WENT BACK.
WE'VE ONLY GOT A LITTLE WAYS TO GO.

...THIS IS FAR ENOUGH.
THE BOSS SAYS...

WE BEAR THESE WOUNDS...

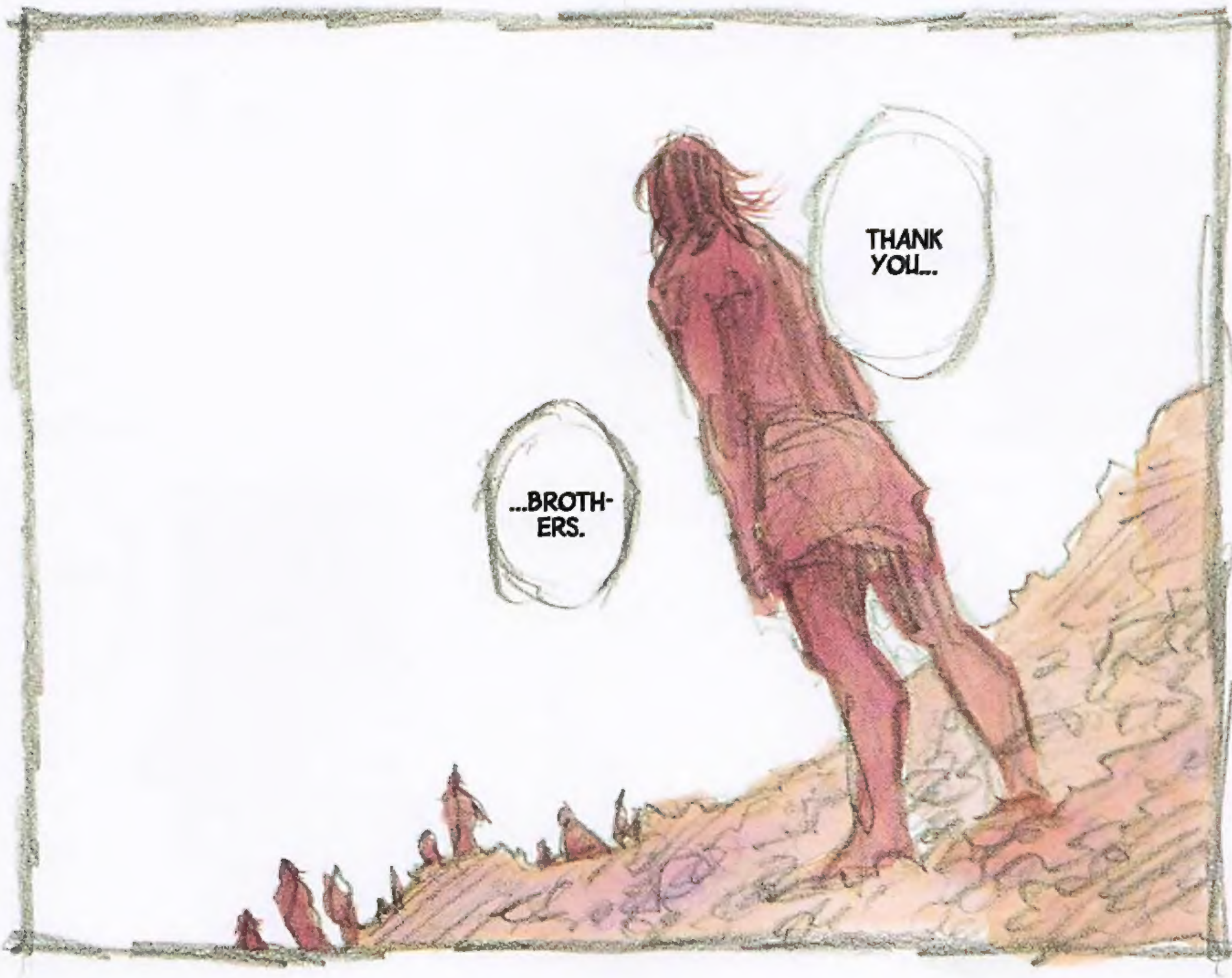

THAT'S WHAT HE SAYS.
...SO AS NOT TO FORGET.

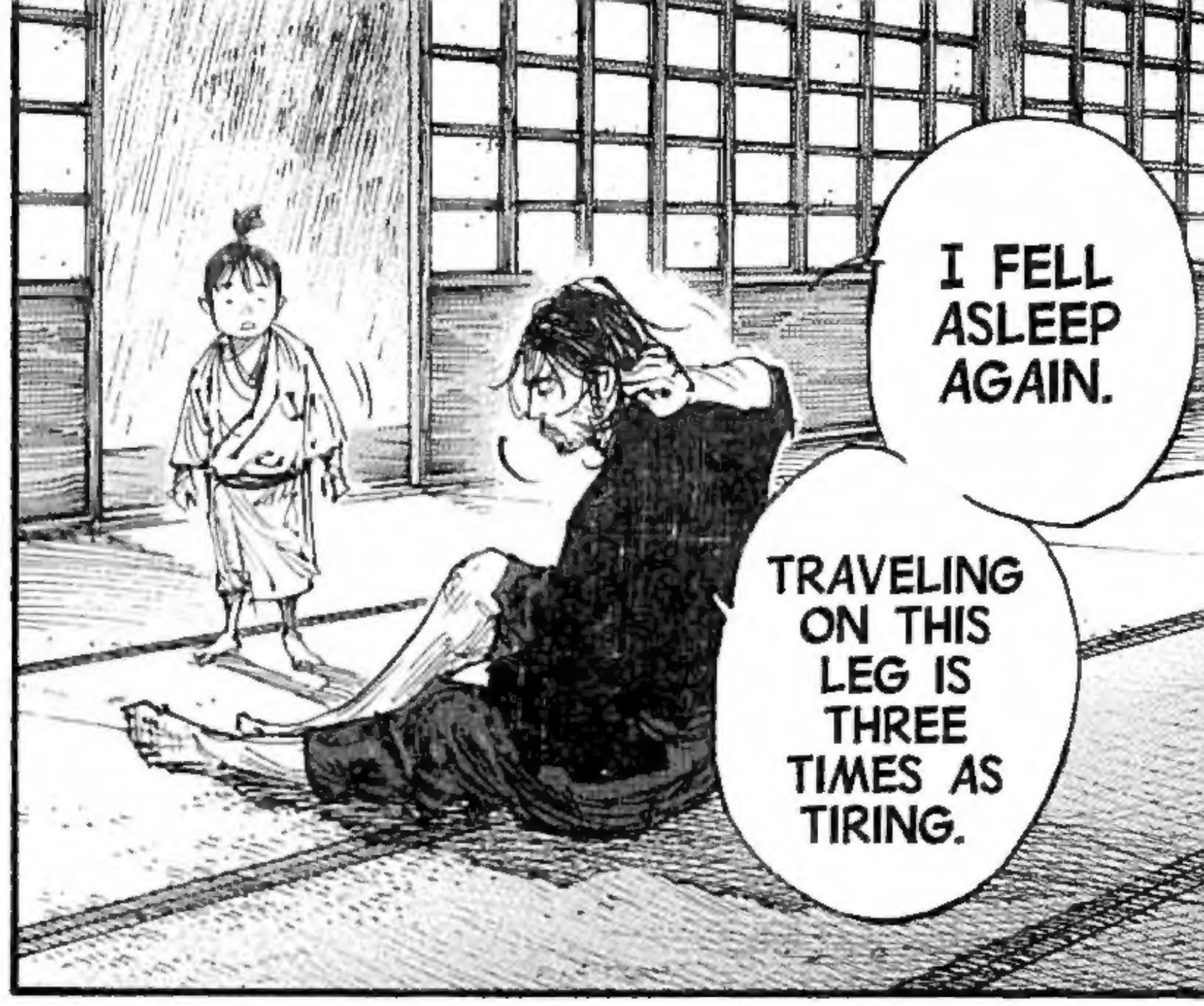
BUT WE'RE SO CLOSE.
OKAY.

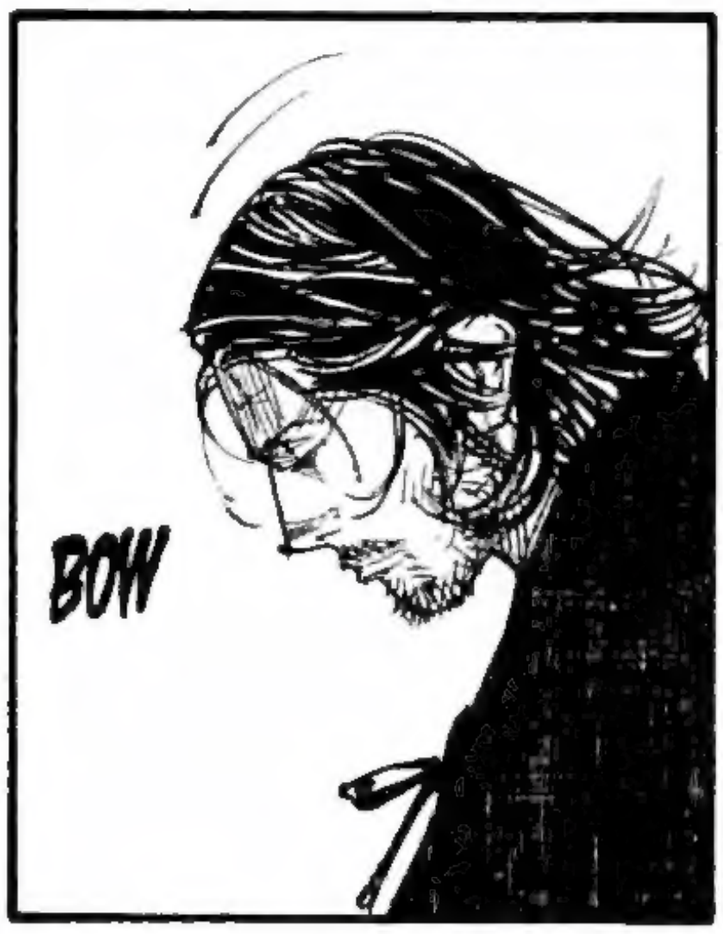
NEXT TIME, WE'LL HELP YOU.

FARE-WELL.
IT MUST BE OKAY IF THAT'S WHAT HE SAID.

CALL US IF YOU NEED HELP.
UNTIL WE MEET AGAIN.


THANK YOU...
...BROTH-ERS.


I FELL ASLEEP AGAIN.
TRAVELING ON THIS LEG IS THREE TIMES AS TIRING.


BOW

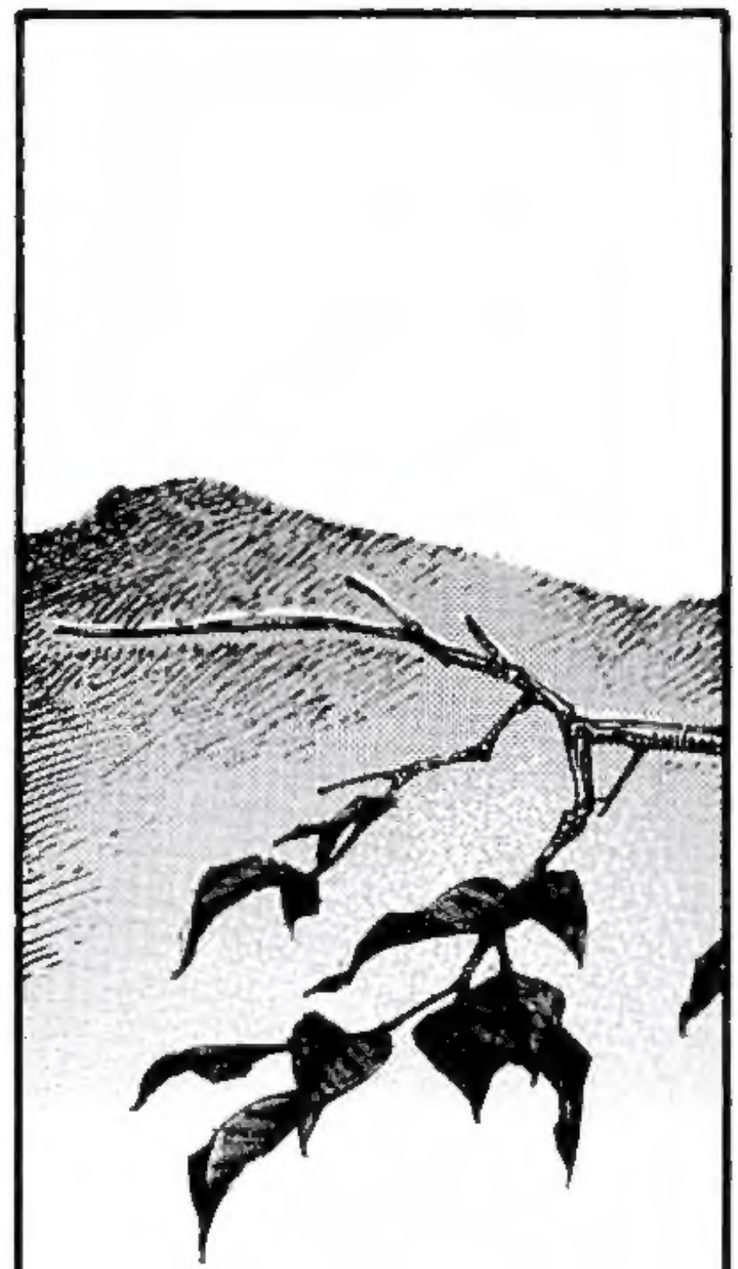
LEAVING ALREADY?
THE MOUNTAIN ROAD TO YAGYŪ IS STEEP. PLEASE TAKE CARE.
THANK YOU.

THRB
THRB

.....
SHUF
SHUF

SHUF
SHUF

I'M FEELING MUCH BETTER.



WHAT DO YOU WANT?

.....

GUESS A CRIPPLED MUSASHI IS STILL MUSASHI.

HMPH...

AMBITIOUS SWORDSMEN WILL HUNT AFTER YOU TO MAKE A NAME FOR THEMSELVES.
SHUF
BUT NOW WITH THAT LEG OF YOURS...
...YOU'RE WEAKER THAN A REGULAR MAN!!
.....

.....

DON'T DO IT.

NOW IT'S OUR TURN.
BUT THIS IS HOW *YOU* MADE YOUR REPUTATION!

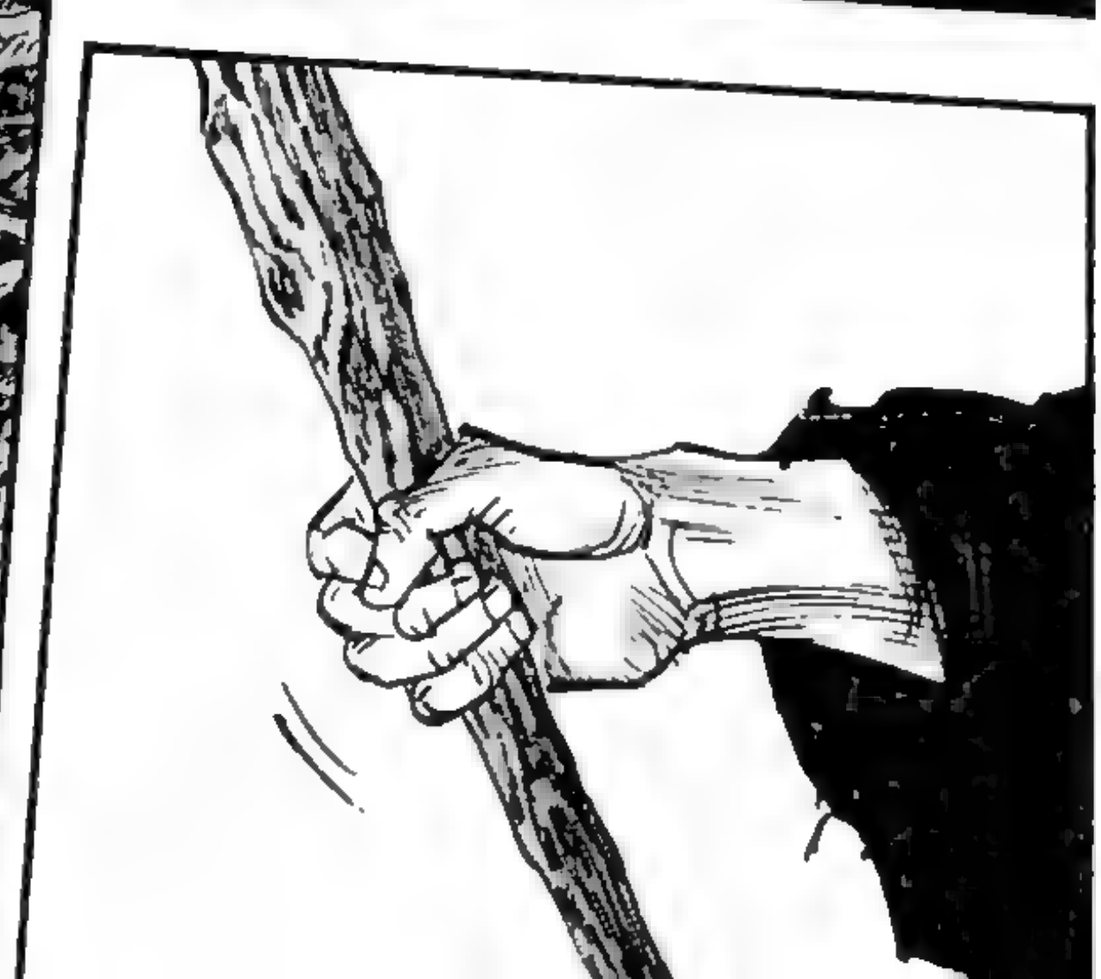
WHY WIELD THE SWORD?
WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO YOU?

YOU'RE NOT EVEN A SAMURAI.
WHY DID YOU TAKE UP THE SWORD?
HUH?
HOW'D YOU KNOW ?
I CAN TELL.

PITIFUL!

SO YOU'RE A MAN OF WORDS NOW THAT YOU CAN'T FIGHT?

HEY!



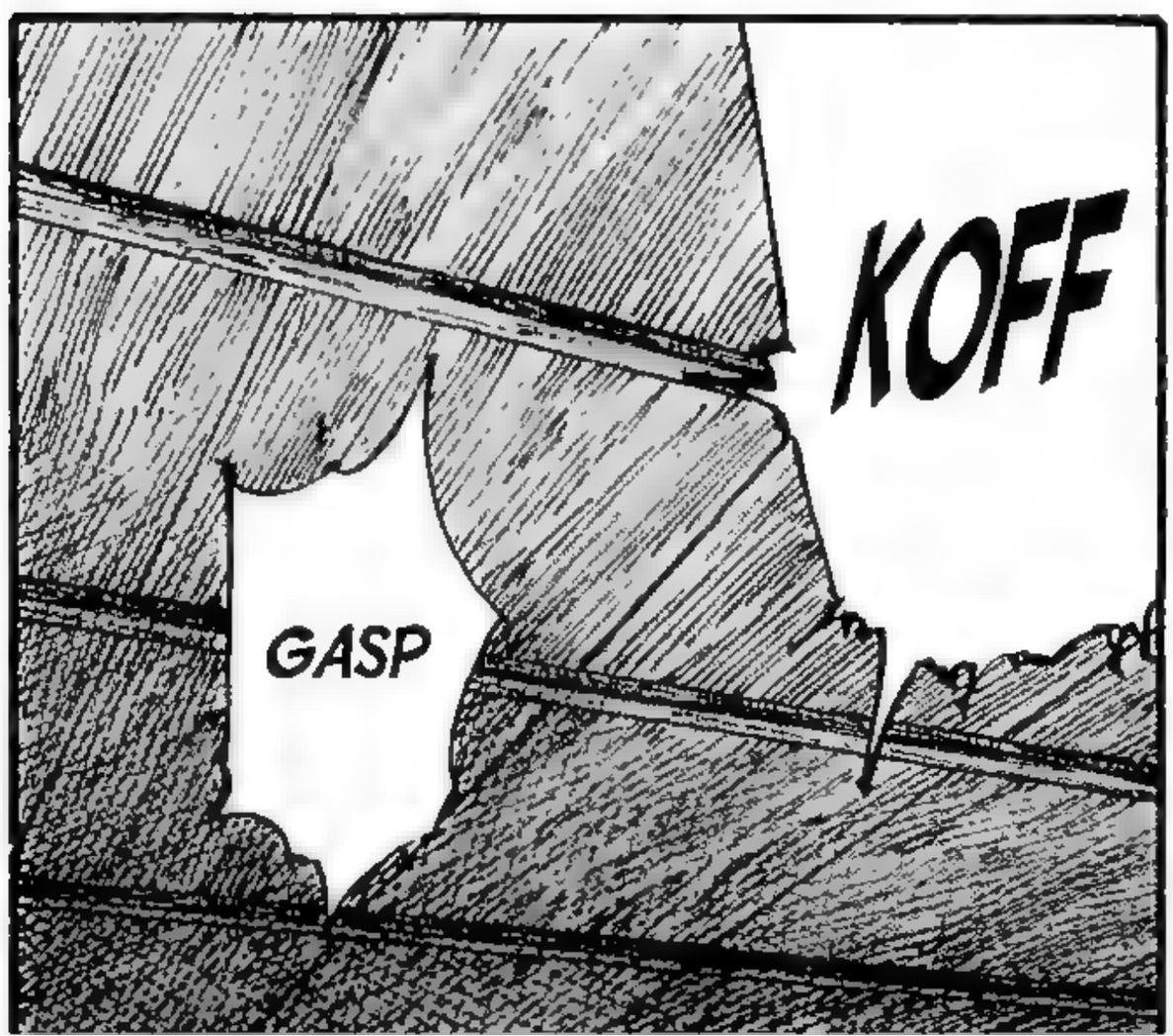
WOOSH
...?!

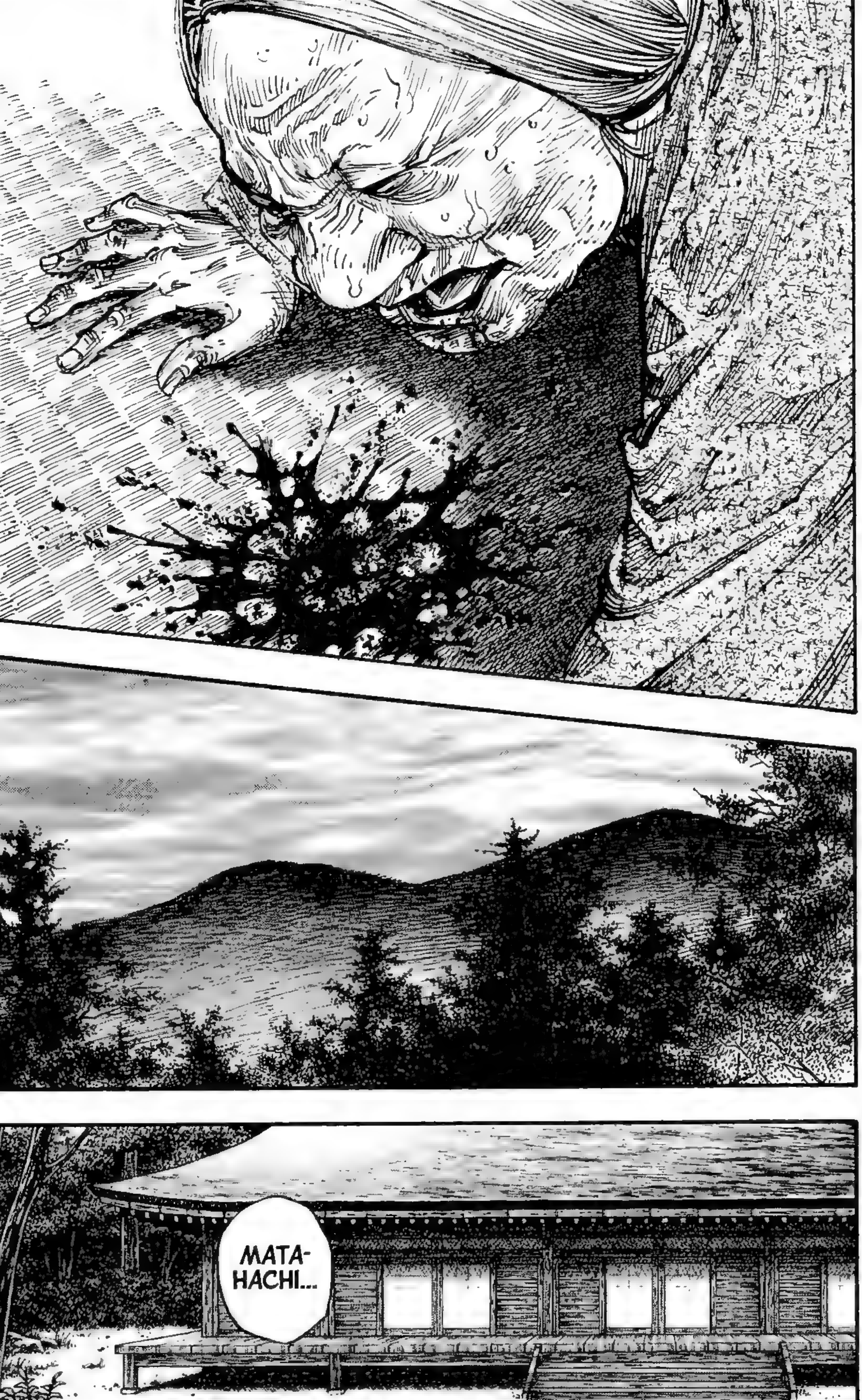
I'M DONE WITH THIS...
...THE SPIRAL OF DEATH.
?!

WILL YOU CHOOSE TO DO IT...
WILL YOU ENTER THIS CIRCLE?
NOW...
I'LL STAY INSIDE THIS CIRCLE.
SO LEAVE.
WITH THIS LEG OF MINE...
...I WON'T CHASE YOU.
WHAT ?!
OR...

KOFF KOFF

GO BACK TO THE VILLAGE?!




MATA-
HACHI...

...

DO YOU HAVE MONEY FOR TRAVEL?

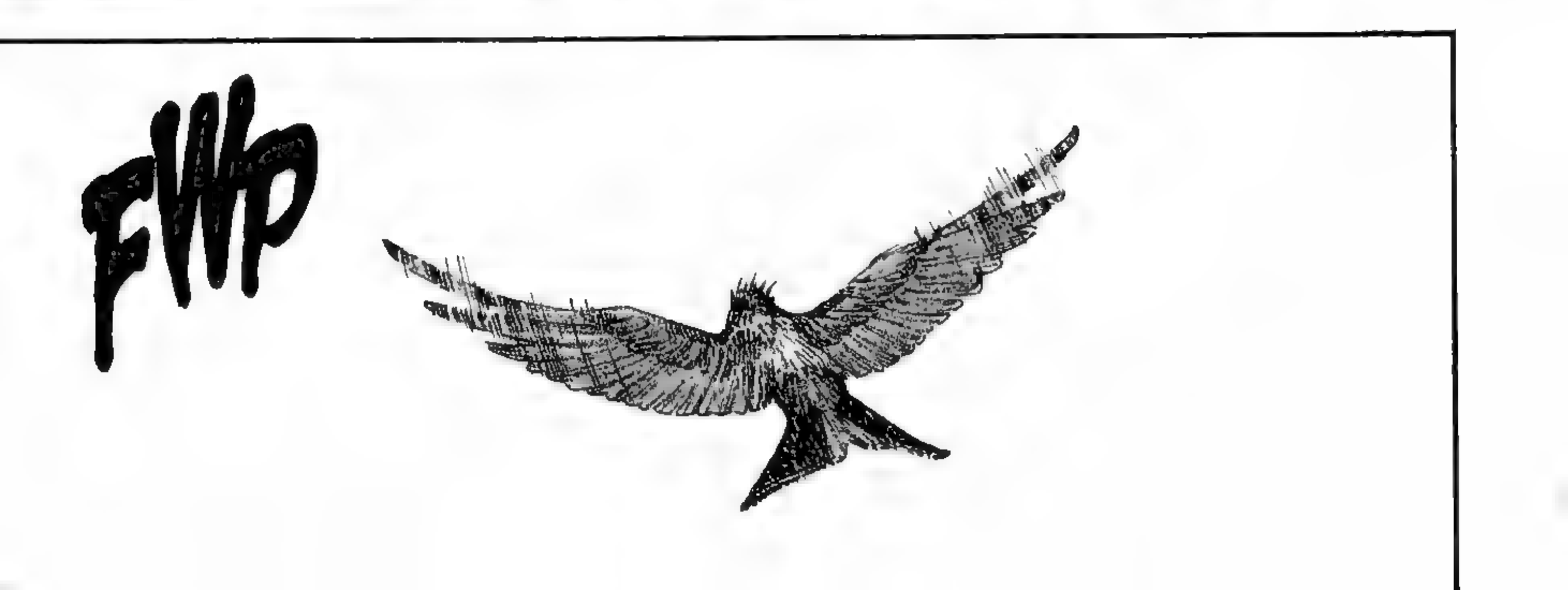
SEPA-RATED FROM MY SON...
THE THOUGHT OF GETTING BACK AT MY ARCHENEMY WAS MY ONLY HOPE.
SUCH A LONG JOURNEY...

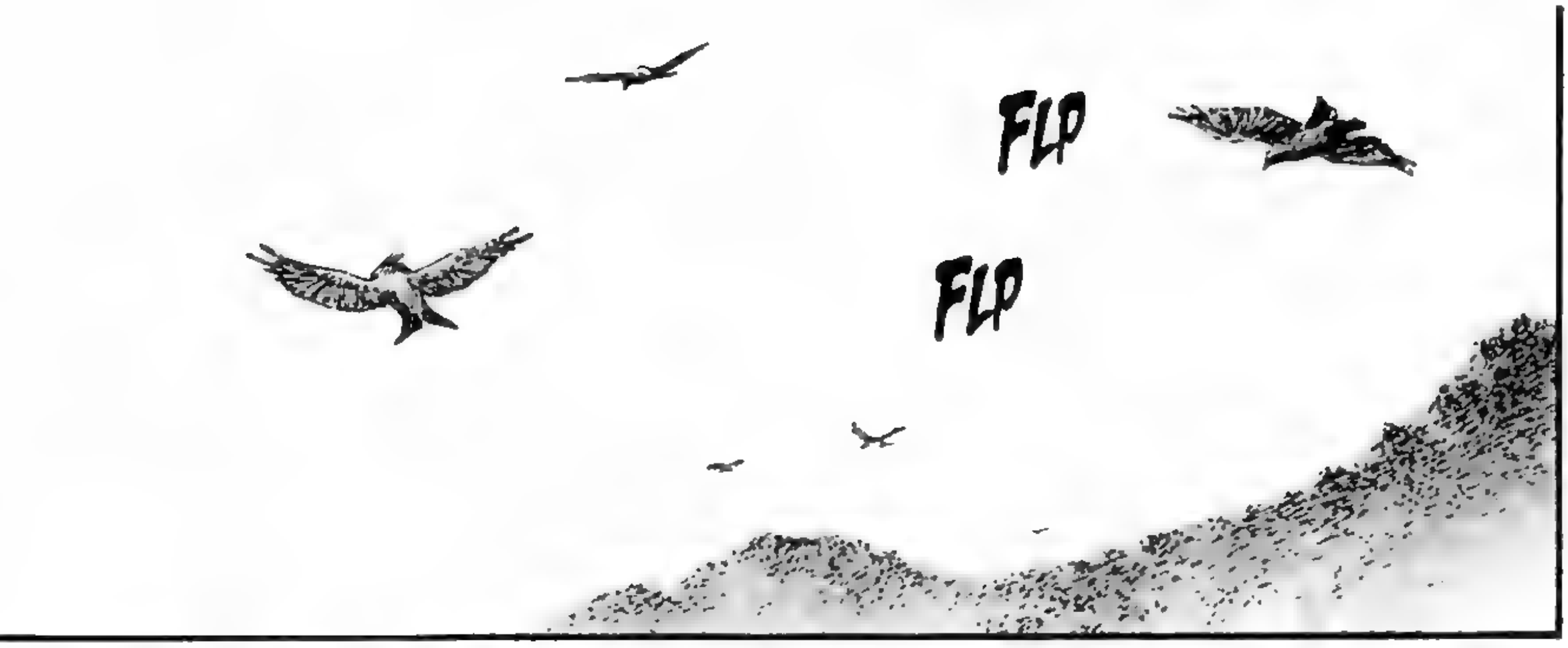
I'D LIKE TO GO BACK TO MIYAMOTO VILLAGE...

MOTHER!!

SO TIRED...

BUT I'M COMPLETELY OUT OF FUNDS.




FLP
FLP

I TOLD YOU TO LEAVE...
WHY DID YOU ENTER THE CIRCLE?

.....

URR...

I'M NOT SO GRACIOUS...

OUCH ...

#271
Enter the Circle

KRICH

KRRCH

LEAVE AS YOU LIKE...

...BUT IF YOU COME IN, I'LL CUT YOU DOWN.

I WON'T SEEK OUT THE FIGHT...

I WON'T CHASE MY ENEMY.

BUT...

...I'M NOT GRACIOUS ENOUGH TO GIVE UP MY LIFE TO ANYONE WHO ENTERS THE CIRCLE.

HUH!

THWUNK

NEVER CHANGE POSITION...

USE THE FORCE OF THE ATTACKERS WHO COME AT YOU...

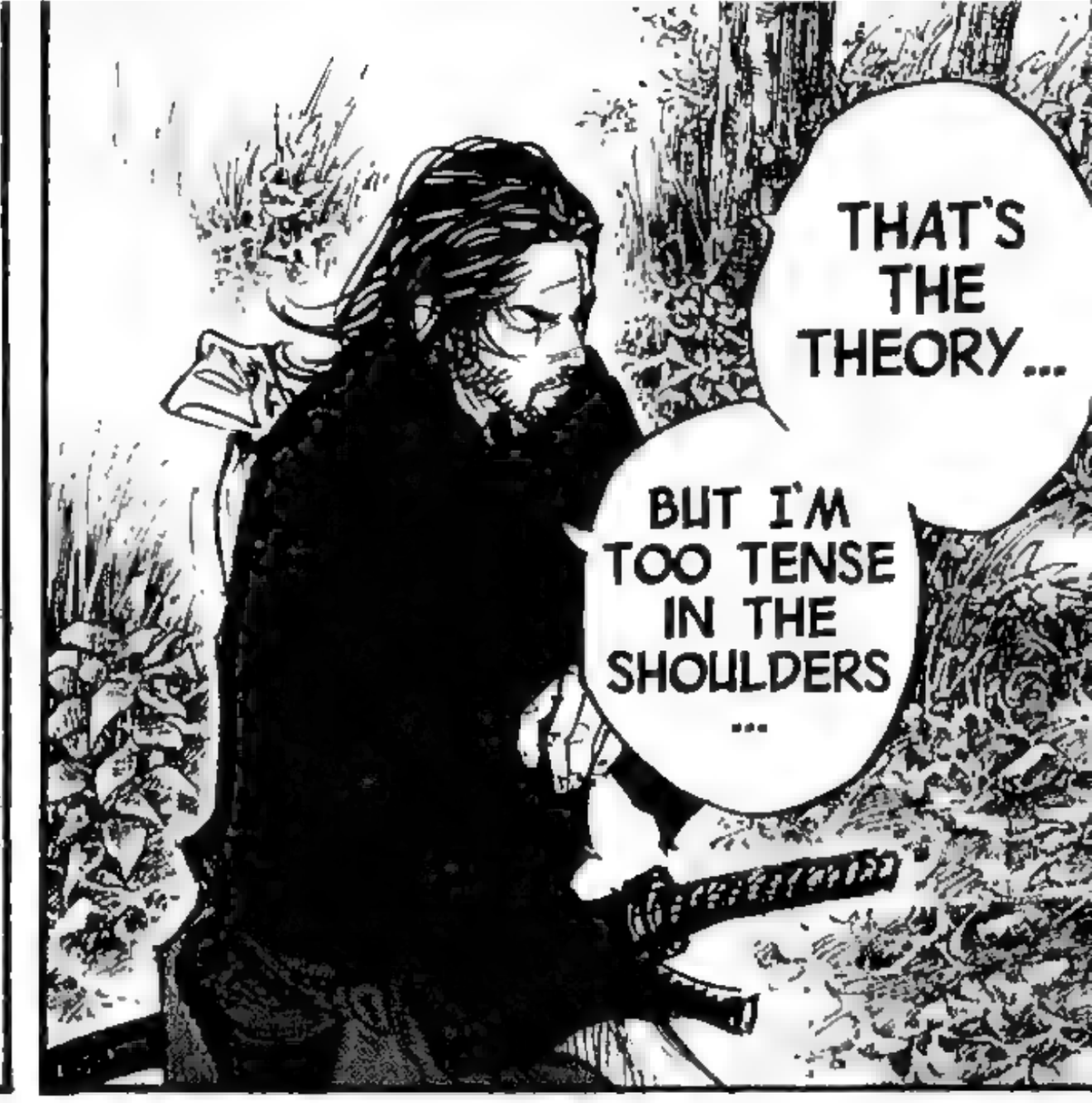
KNOW THE ATTACK WILL COME. GAIN THE ADVANTAGE.

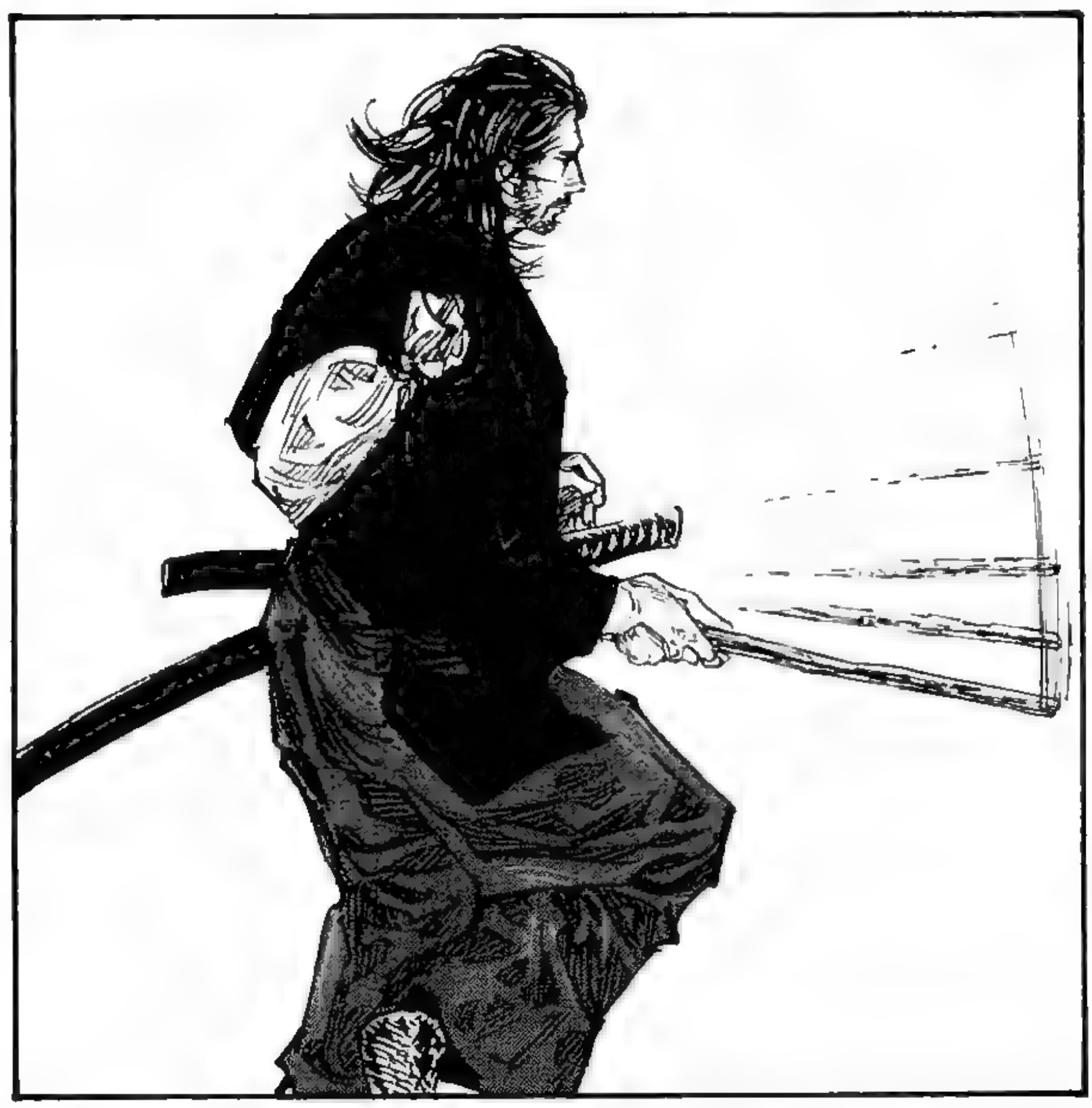
KRINCH

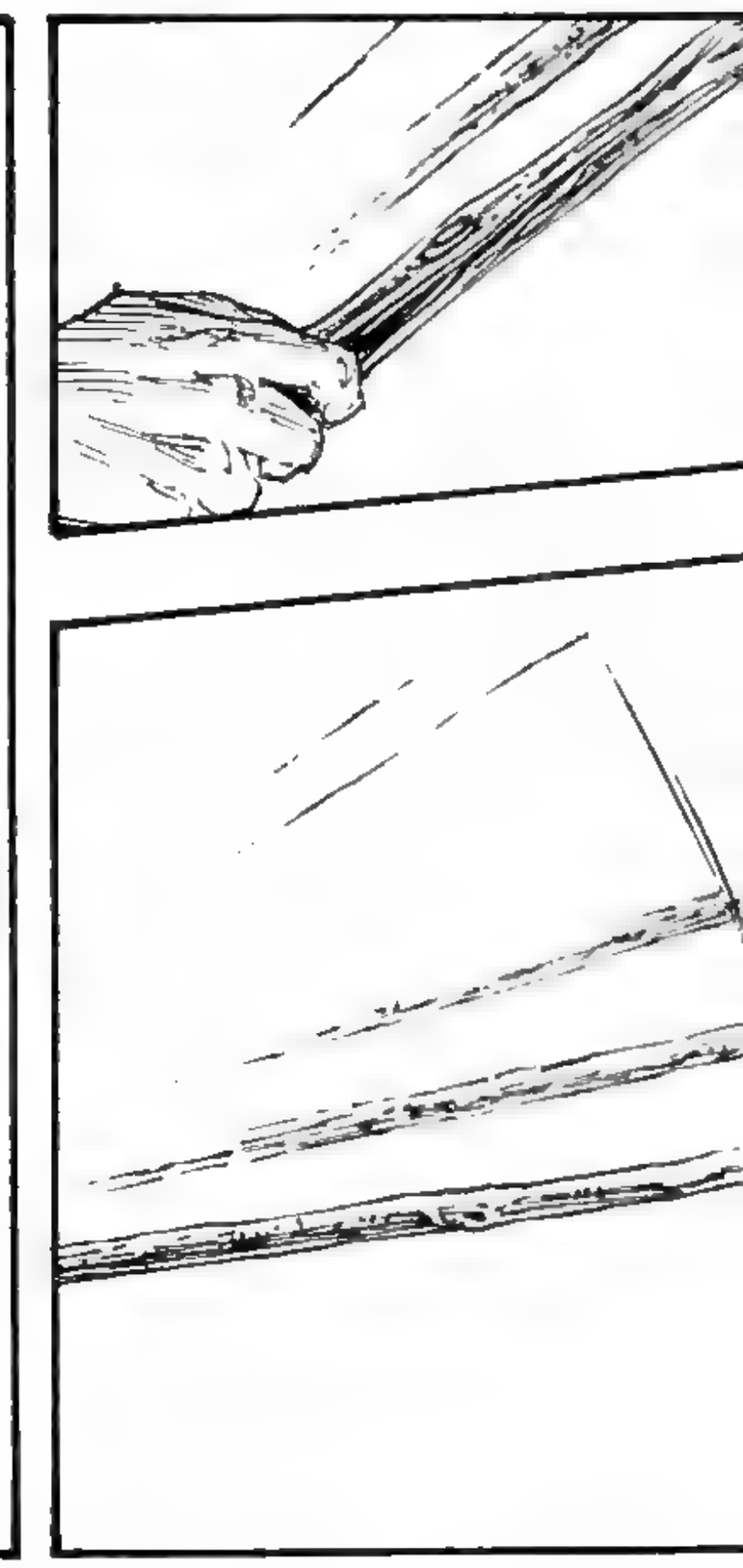
...!!

SHUF

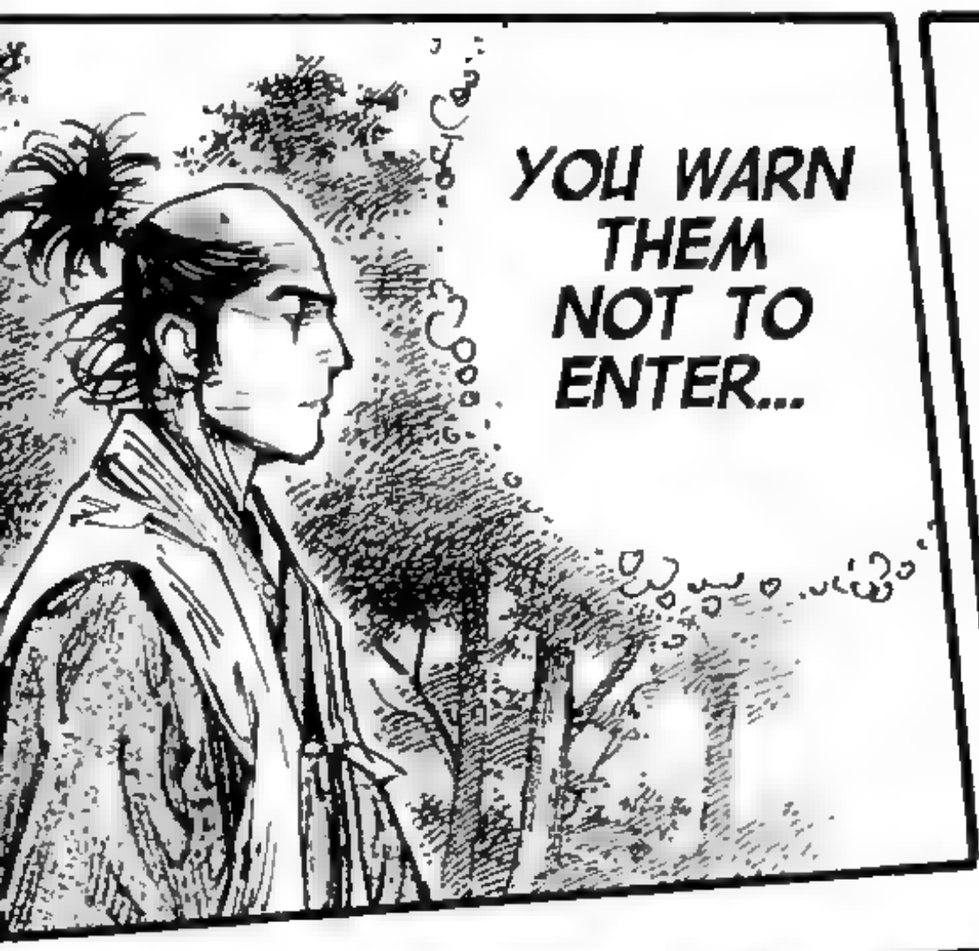
HYUUU


THAT'S THE THEORY...
BUT I'M TOO TENSE IN THE SHOULDERS ...





SHUF
SHUF


YOU WARN THEM NOT TO ENTER...

WHAT ABOUT "LEAVING THE SPIRAL OF DEATH"?
IS THAT WHAT YOU ARE REALLY DOING?

BUT IT APPEARS MORE AS IF YOU ARE DRAWING THEM IN.

SHUF

SHUF

ARE YOU REALLY SEEKING THE LIGHT...

OR...

...ARE YOU STILL DRAWN TO THE DARKNESS, UNCHANGED FROM WHEN YOU DID BATTLE WITH US?

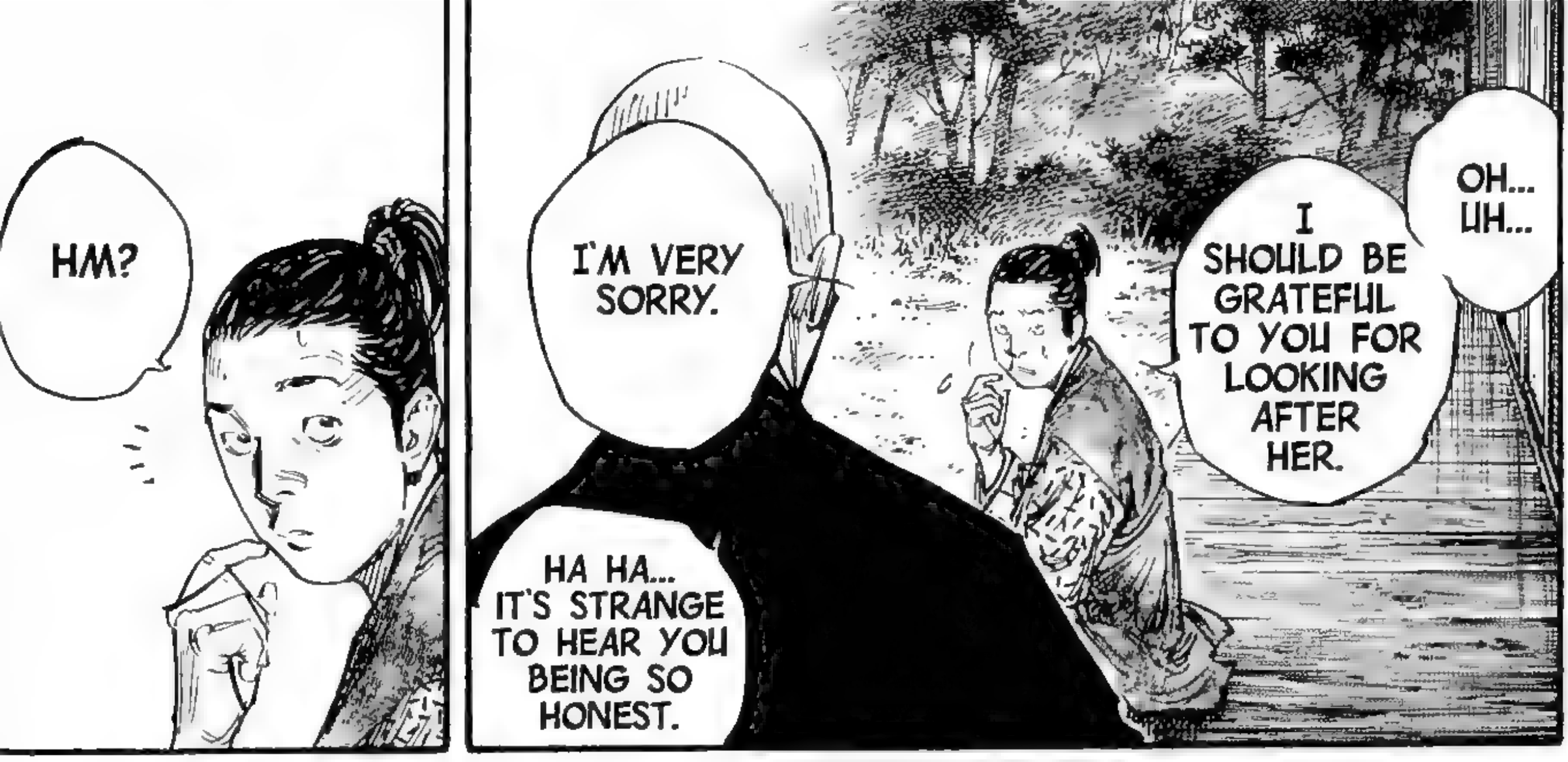
WHERE ARE YOU HEADED, MUSASHI?

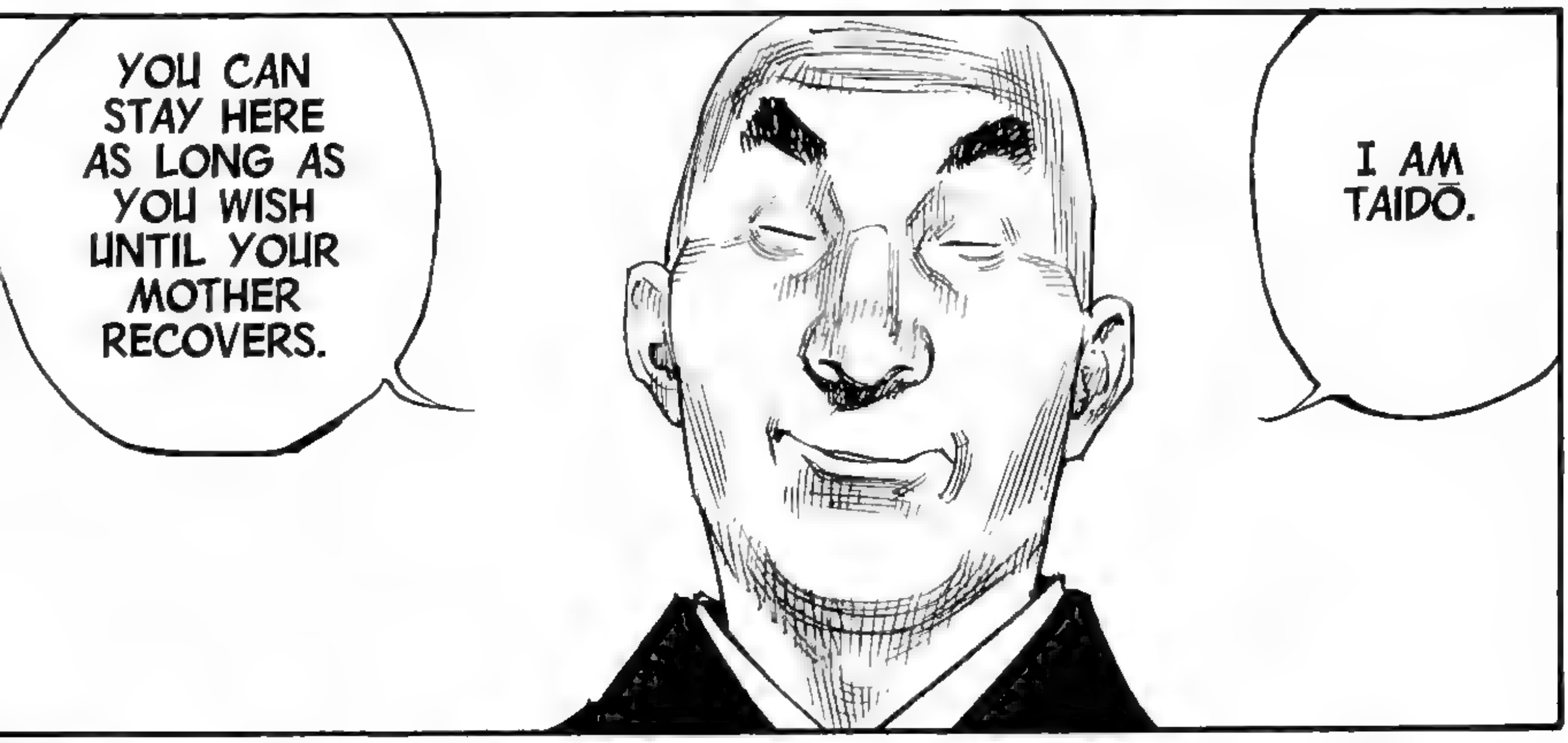
SHUF
SHUF

ZZZ
ZZZ

IT SEEMS OSUGI IS DOING MUCH BETTER.

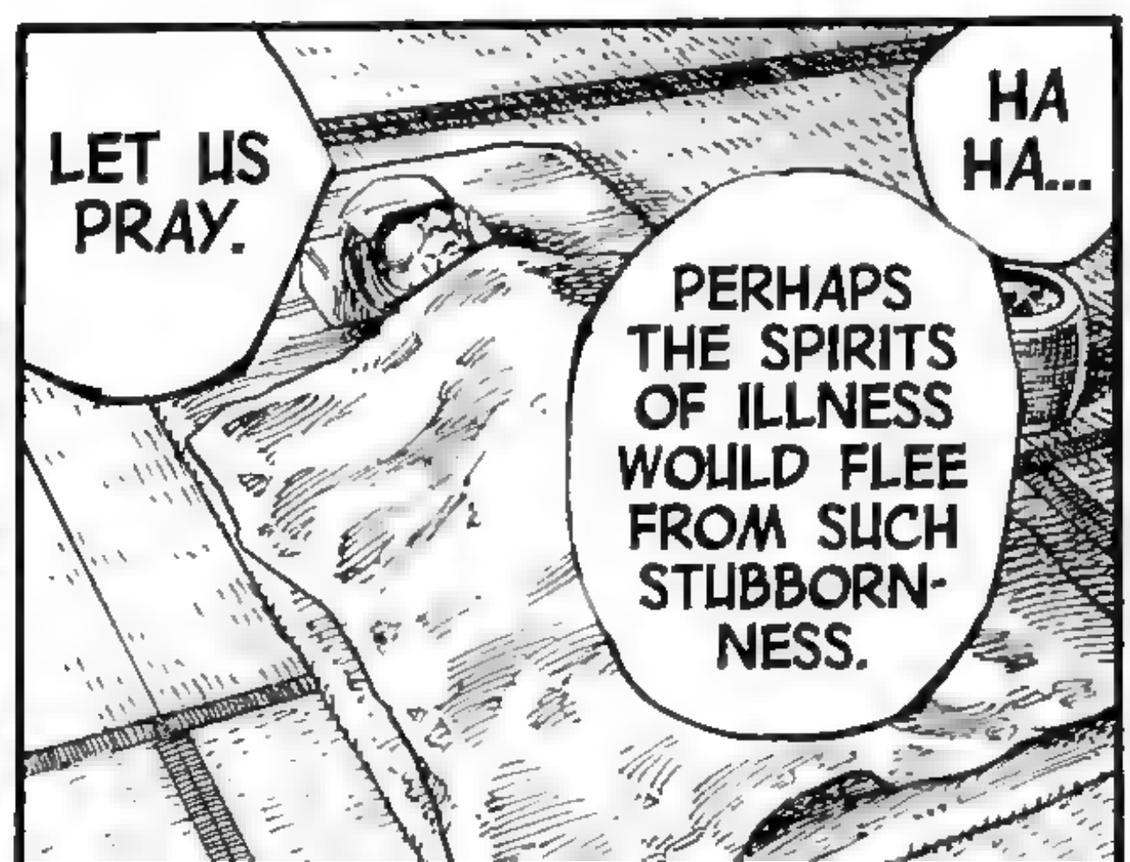
J-JUST ...
JUST LEAVE US ALONE!!
HM?
ALL THAT TRAVELING TOOK A TOLL ON HER. SHE'S NOT YOUNG.


HM?
I'M VERY SORRY.
HA HA... IT'S STRANGE TO HEAR YOU BEING SO HONEST.
I SHOULD BE GRATEFUL TO YOU FOR LOOKING AFTER HER.
OH... UH...


YOU CAN STAY HERE AS LONG AS YOU WISH UNTIL YOUR MOTHER RECOVERS.
I AM TAIDŌ.

MORNING AND NIGHT, SHE PRAYED FOR YOU EVERY DAY.

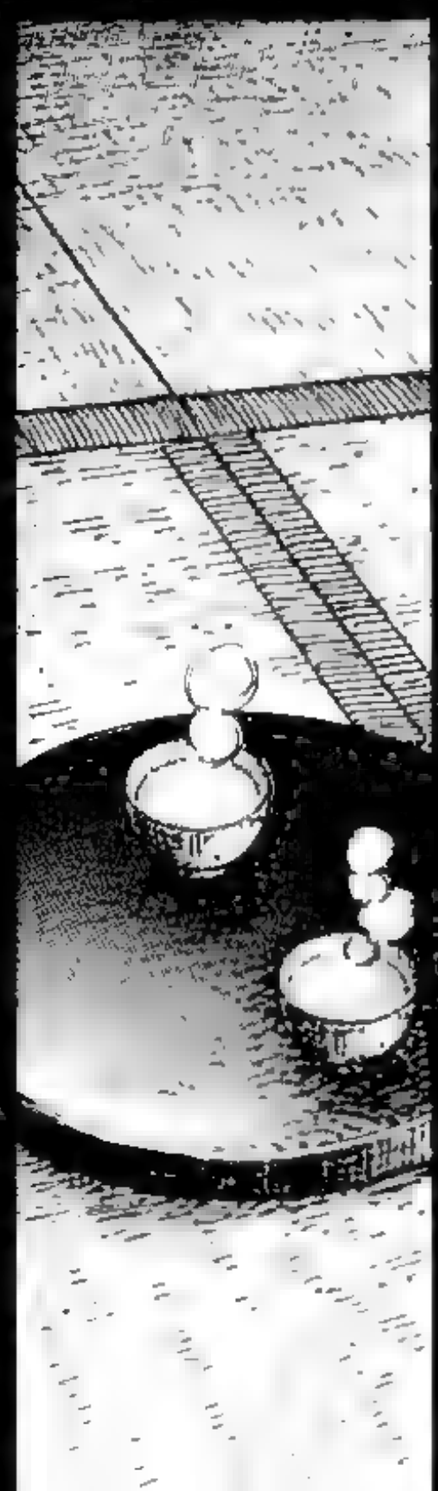
OH, HAS SHE BEEN TALKING AGAIN?
I MUST SAY SHE HAS AN IRON WILL.


LET US PRAY.
HA HA...
PERHAPS THE SPIRITS OF ILLNESS WOULD FLEE FROM SUCH STUBBORN-NESS.

HE LIVES OFF OF HIS LIES, THAT SON OF MINE...
BUT PLEASE FORGIVE HIM!
PLEASE GIVE HIM STRENGTH.

YOU WERE SAYING HE LIES.
SEEKING A WORTHY POSITION.
TRAVELING, THE WARRIOR'S PILGRIMAGE YOU MIGHT SAY...
HRM ?
WHERE IS YOUR SON? WHAT DOES HE DO?

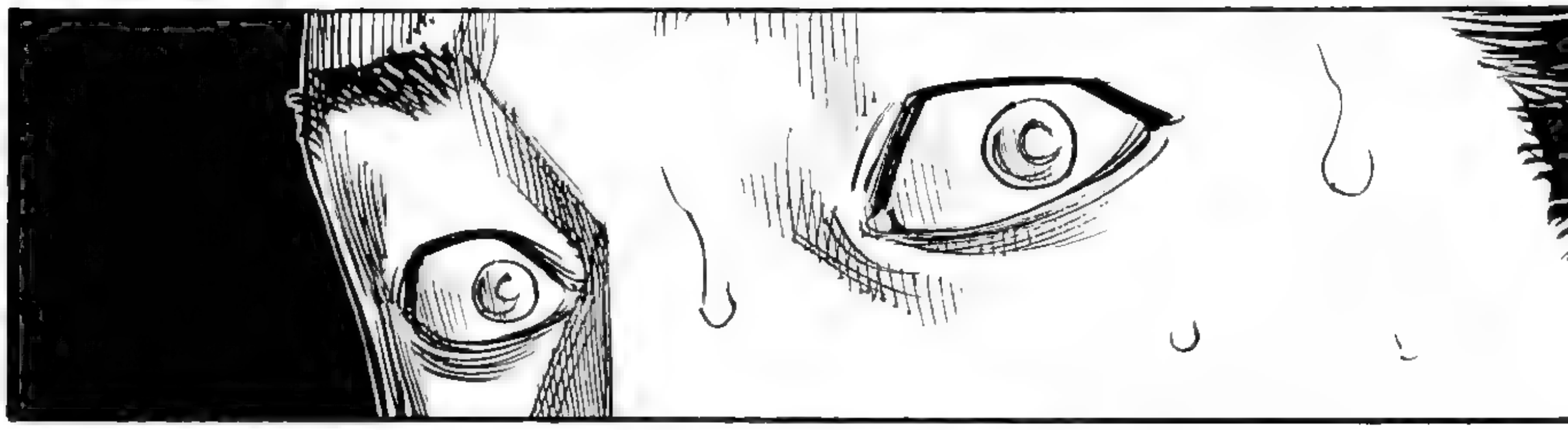
HAS A CERTIFICATE, HE SAYS.
MAKING A NAME FOR HIMSELF.



WHAT WAS THAT?!
WHO SAID THAT!
I, UH...
KOFF KOFF
KOFF

HE DOESN'T HAVE TO LIE TO ME.

I'M HIS MOTHER...



I'M SO ASHAMED.

I...

NO...

THIS ISN'T GOOD! I'LL GET A DOCTOR.

STAY WITH HER, MATA-HACHI!

SHE'S BURNING UP!!

...

HUF

HUF

HUF

THAT'S RIGHT.

SO MATA-HACHI...

HUF

HUF

...

NOW WHERE WAS I?

HUF

HUF

HUF

HUF

TAIDŌ ...?

HUF

I BELIEVE IN HIM.

I STILL BELIEVE IN THAT BOY.

HUF

HUF

AND HE HAD SOMEHOW EVEN GOTTEN HOLD OF A REAL CERTIFICATE.

HE SAID THAT HE WAS GIVEN A CERTIFICATE OF SWORDSMANSHIP.

WONDER WHERE YOU CAN BUY SUCH A THING... HA HA...

BUT IT WAS IN ANOTHER'S NAME.

HUF

HE'S DOING HIS BEST.

HE'S DOING WHAT HE CAN.

HUF

HUF

HUF

WEEZ

I DON'T CARE IF HE LIES...

...HE CAN'T BE LIKE TAKEZŌ.

HE'S JEALOUS BECAUSE ...

HUF

HUF

I'M HIS MOTHER AND I'LL ALWAYS BE ON HIS SIDE.
TONIGHT WILL BE CRITICAL.

#272 | Going Home with Broken Dreams

TONIGHT WILL BE CRITICAL.

?

HUH?

WAIT...

DO YOU MEAN--?

BUT...

C'MON, OSUGI!

YOUR SON'S FINALLY HERE WITH YOU!

WHAT DO YOU MEAN CRITICAL ?

HUH?

THIS IS SO SUDDEN!

HEY!

HEY!

YOU SOME KIND OF QUACK?!

HUSH, MATA-HACHI!

...

THIS IS...

HUH...?

SHE MUST BE A VERY STRONG PERSON.

SHE'S BEEN PUSHING HERSELF FAR BEYOND HER LIMITS.

SHE'S BEEN ILL FOR SOME TIME.

FWOM

...!!

...

...

...

I'LL KILL YOU!

HAH! THERE YOU ARE, YOU DEMON! I HAVE YOU NOW!

YAH!

YOU BEAST...

GASP

!!

UH...

HEY!

MA!

HMM

ZZZ

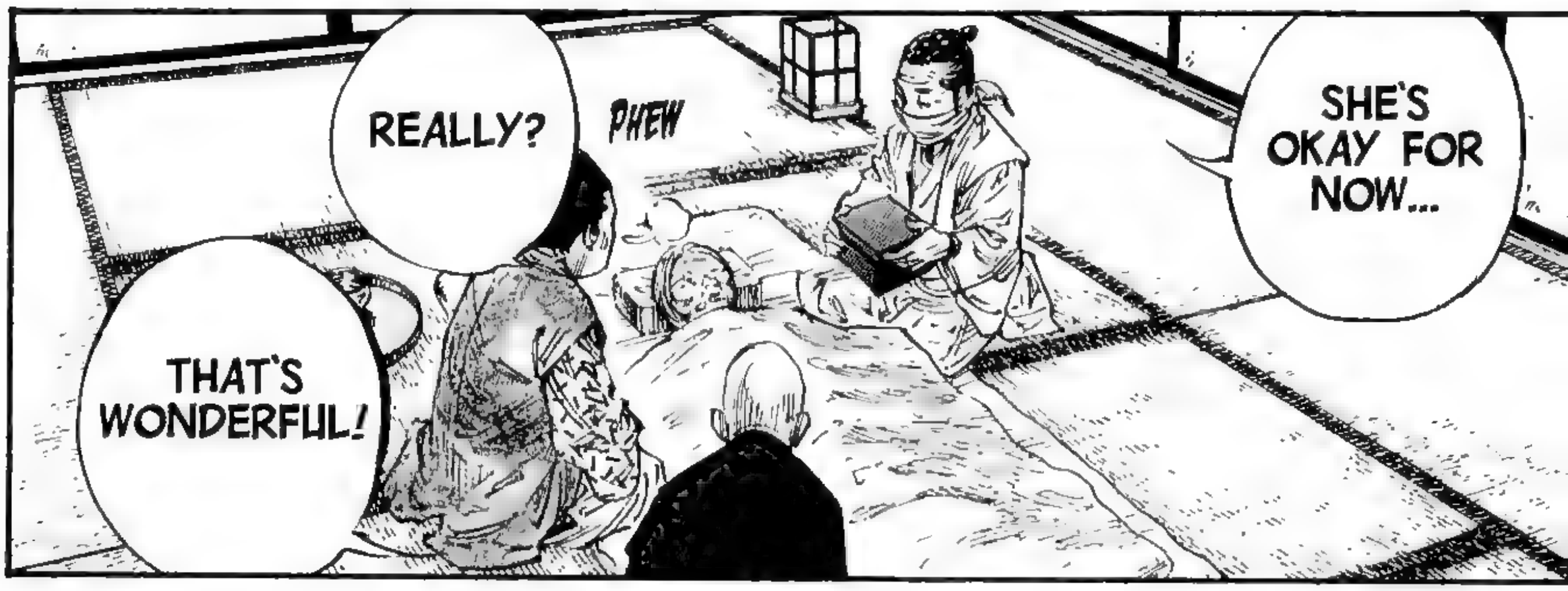
OSUGI!

WHUDD

!!

CHIRP

CHIRP
CHIRP
CHIRP


REALLY?
PHEW
SHE'S OKAY FOR NOW...
THAT'S WONDERFUL!

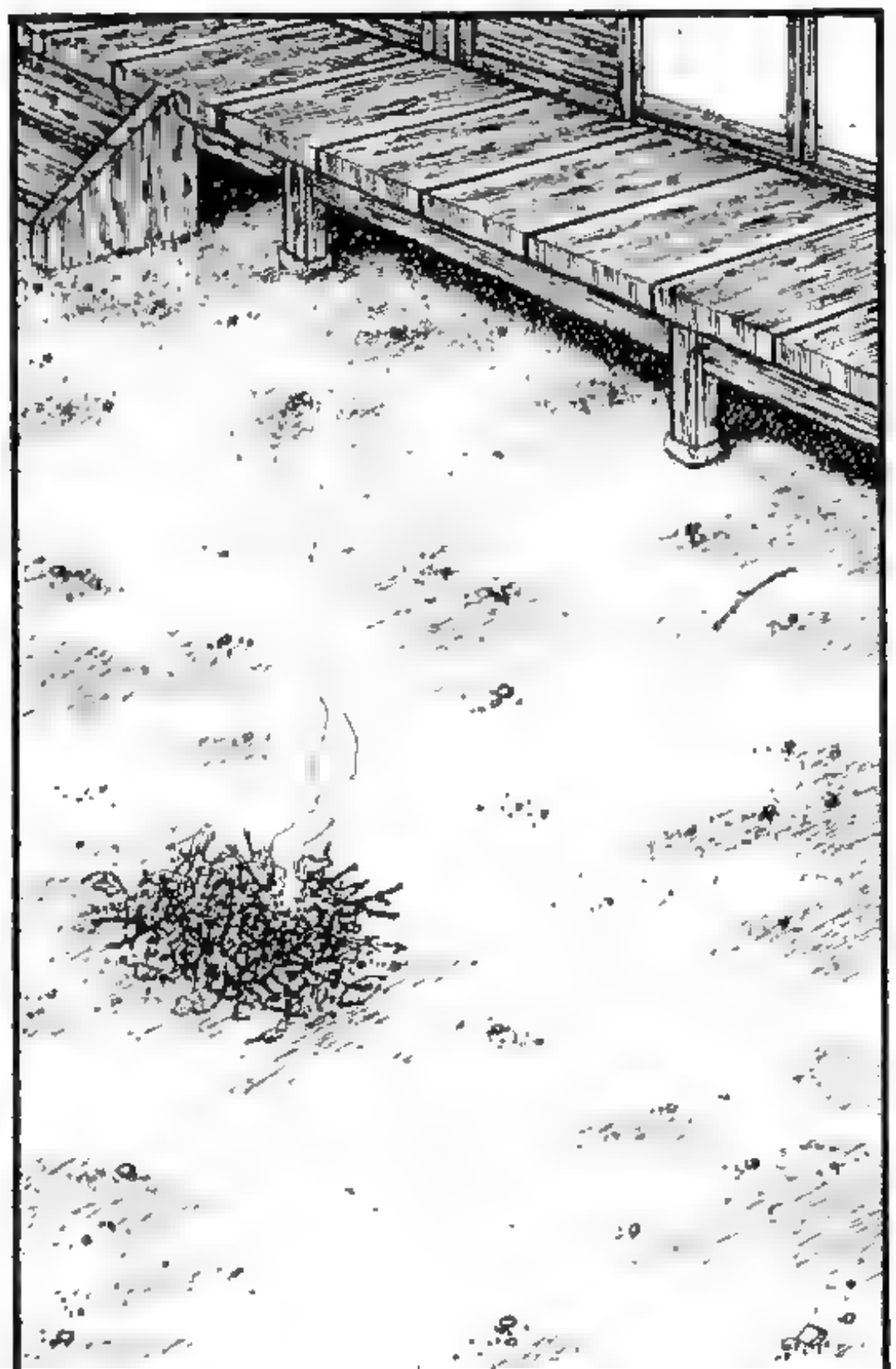
BUT...
...SHE MAY GO AT ANY TIME.

CONSIDER THAT...
AND MAKE SURE SHE HAS NO REGRETS.

.....

HM?

WAIT, MATA-HACHI.
WHERE ARE YOU GOING?



MIMASAKA...

BACK HOME TO MIYAMOTO VILLAGE.

WE'RE GOING HOME TOGETHER.

I SEE.

WAIT HERE AND WARM YOURSELVES BY THE FIRE.

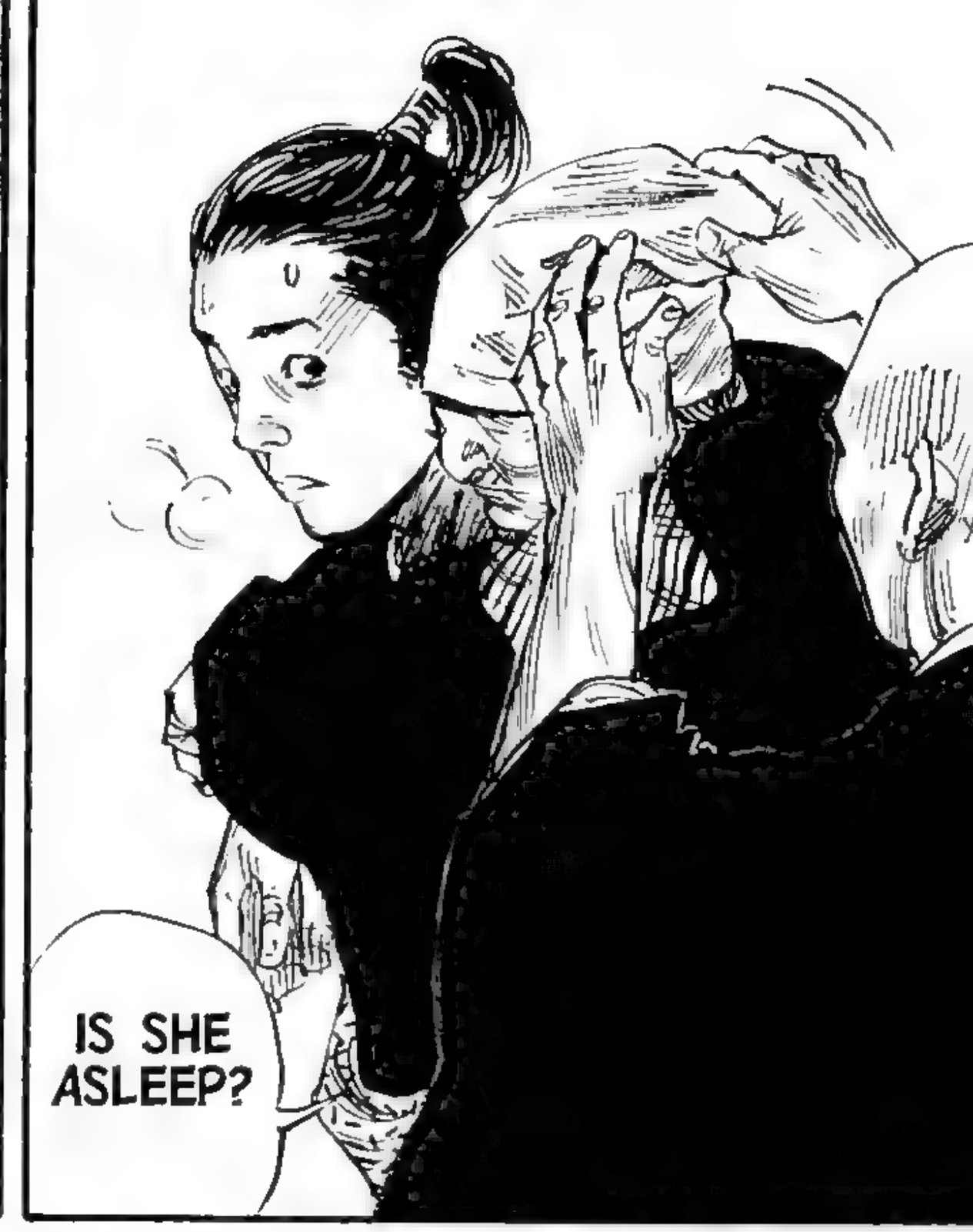
I'LL PREPARE SOME FOOD FOR YOU.

OSUGI MUST BE COLD LIKE THAT.

WAIT THERE A MOMENT.

WELL THEN...

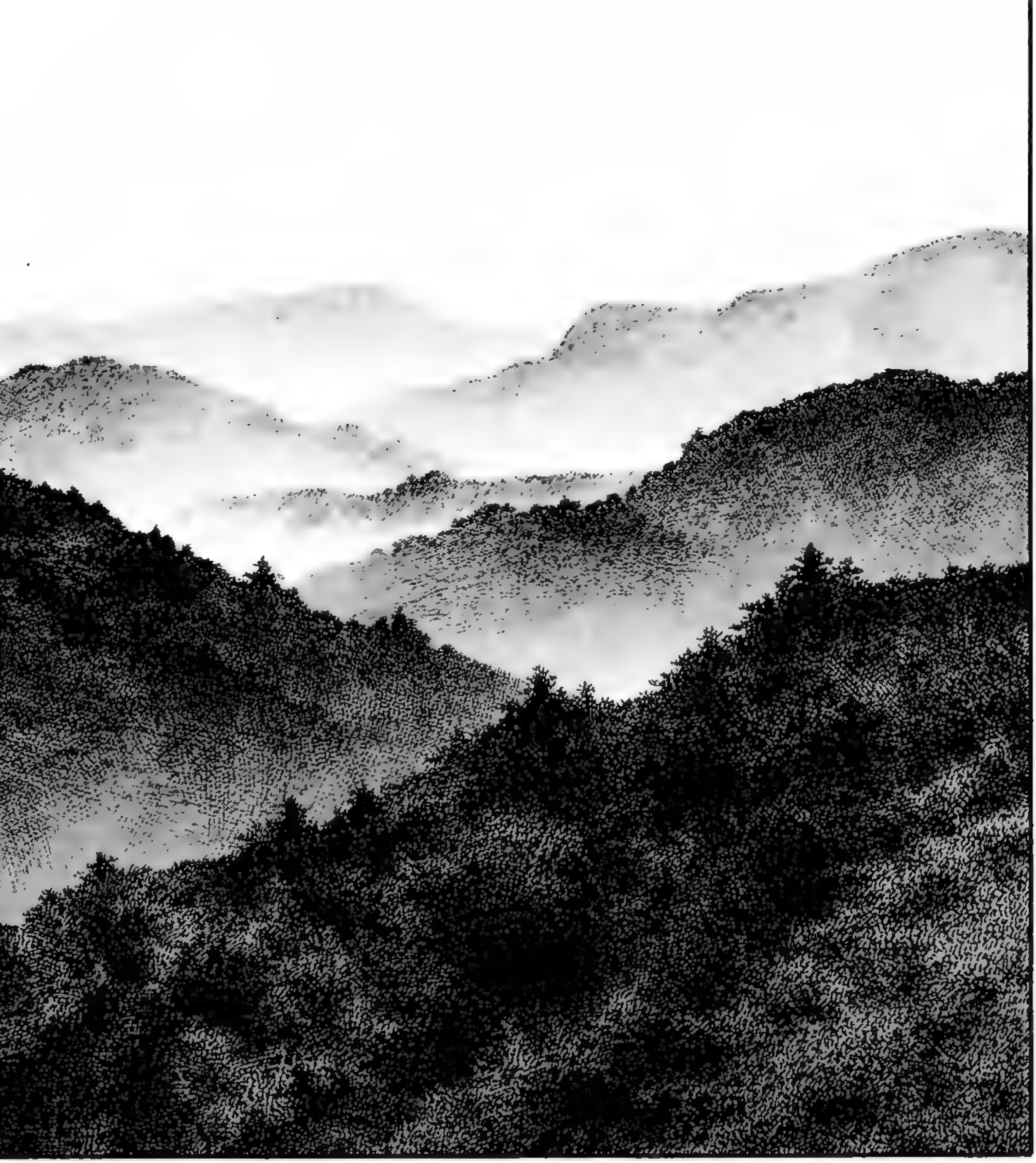
ARE YOU OKAY, MATA-HACHI?
I'M FINE, SIR.


IS SHE ASLEEP?

.....
SHE'S BECOME LIGHT AS A FEATHER...

.....

WELL, TAKE CARE.
HERE'S A LITTLE MONEY IN CASE YOU NEED IT.
WHAT ?!



...SINCE I CAME TO KYOTO.
THAT'S THE FIRST TIME ANY-ONE'S SHOWN ME ANY KINDNESS...

I'M SO SORRY...

I SHOULD HAVE THANKED YOU MORE PROPERLY.
TAIDŌ...

I'M SURE THE CITY EXHAUSTED YOU.
...FOR MAKING YOU TRAVEL AT THIS AGE.
IT SURE DID TIRE ME TO NO END.

HUP

YOU HAD NEVER EVEN STEPPED FOOT OUTSIDE OF MIYAMOTO VILLAGE...

NOW I'M RETURNING WITH MY MOTHER.
I LEFT THE VILLAGE WITH TAKEZŌ.
SEKIGA-HARA...
OSAKA...
KYOTO...

AND YOU...
YOU FINALLY MADE A NAME FOR YOURSELF WITH THE SWORD.
NO DOUBT YOU'LL SOON FIND A COMFORTABLE POSITION WITH SOME DAIMYO.
AND THAT WILL BE THE END OF YOUR JOURNEY.
BUT AS FOR ME...

I DISCOVERED WOMEN. LOST MYSELF TO THEM.

WOW!

I STARTED DRINKING.

I LEARNED A THING OR TWO.

AND THEN...

AH...

LIES LIES LIES...

LIES...

AHH, KOJIRŌ...

KOFF

KOFF KOFF KOFF

IF...
...TAKEZŌ WEREN'T THE SAME AGE AS ME, IF WE WEREN'T FROM THE SAME VILLAGE...
I WOULDN'T HAVE HAD TO LIE.
IF ONLY TAKEZŌ DIDN'T EXIST...
THEN...
...I'D HAVE NO FRIENDS.

WHERE THE HECK AM I?

TAKEZŌ, TAKEZŌ, TAKEZŌ!

...AND TOSS IT ALL AWAY.

CHOP IT UP...

I'D LIKE TO TAKE THIS WEAK-NESS...

WHY AM I SO WEAK?

JUST GIVE UP.

...END IT ALL TOGETHER.

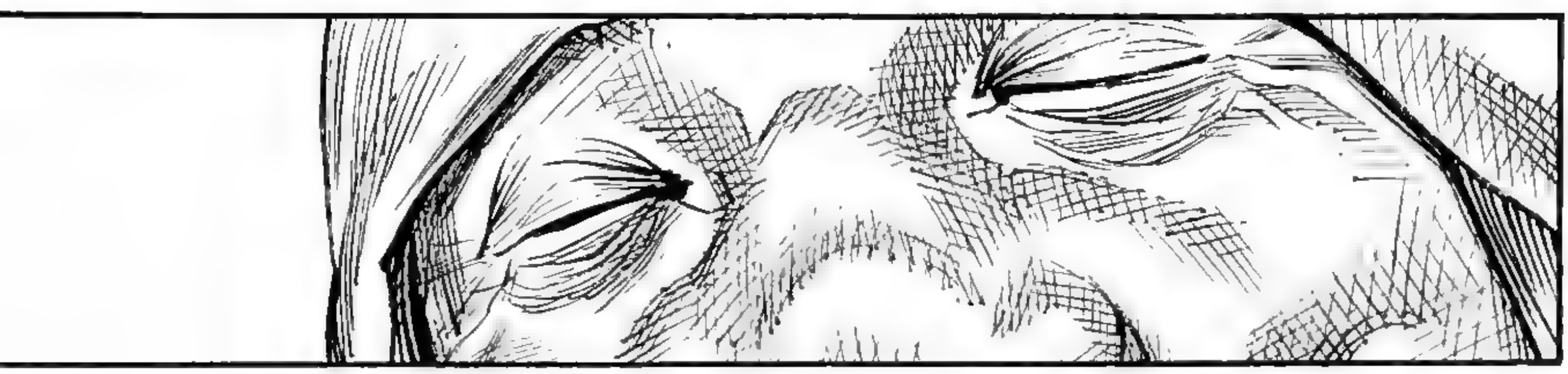
MOTHER...

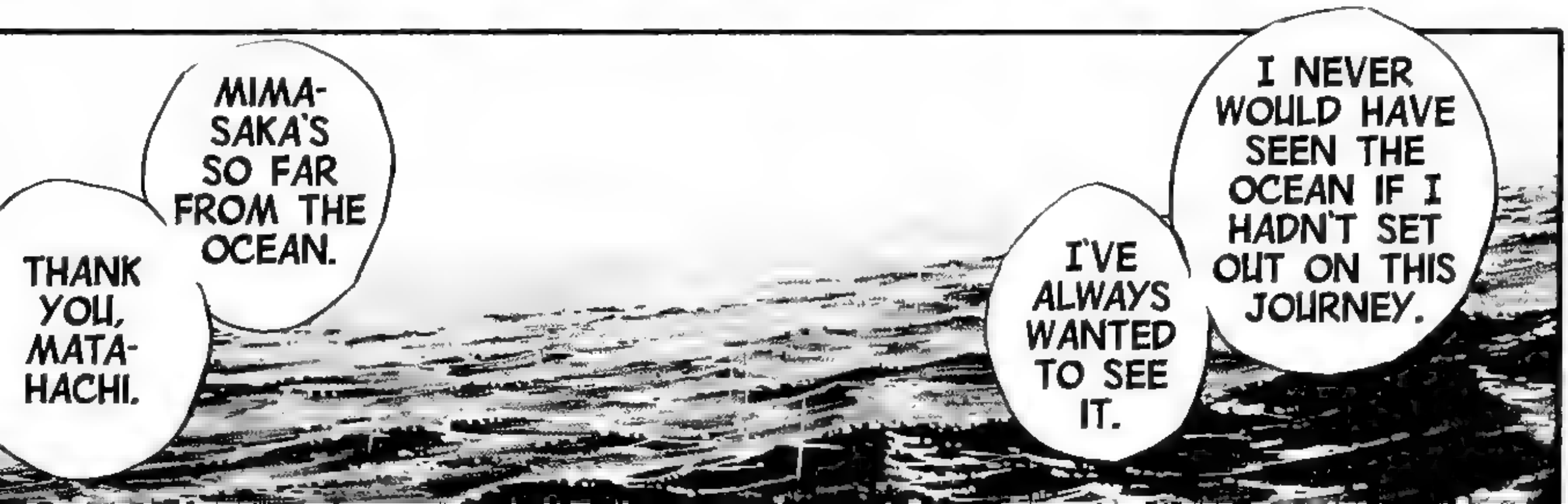
LET'S...

THE SEA...

WHAT...? THERE'S NO OCEAN HERE.

HUH?
LOOK AT THE OCEAN.



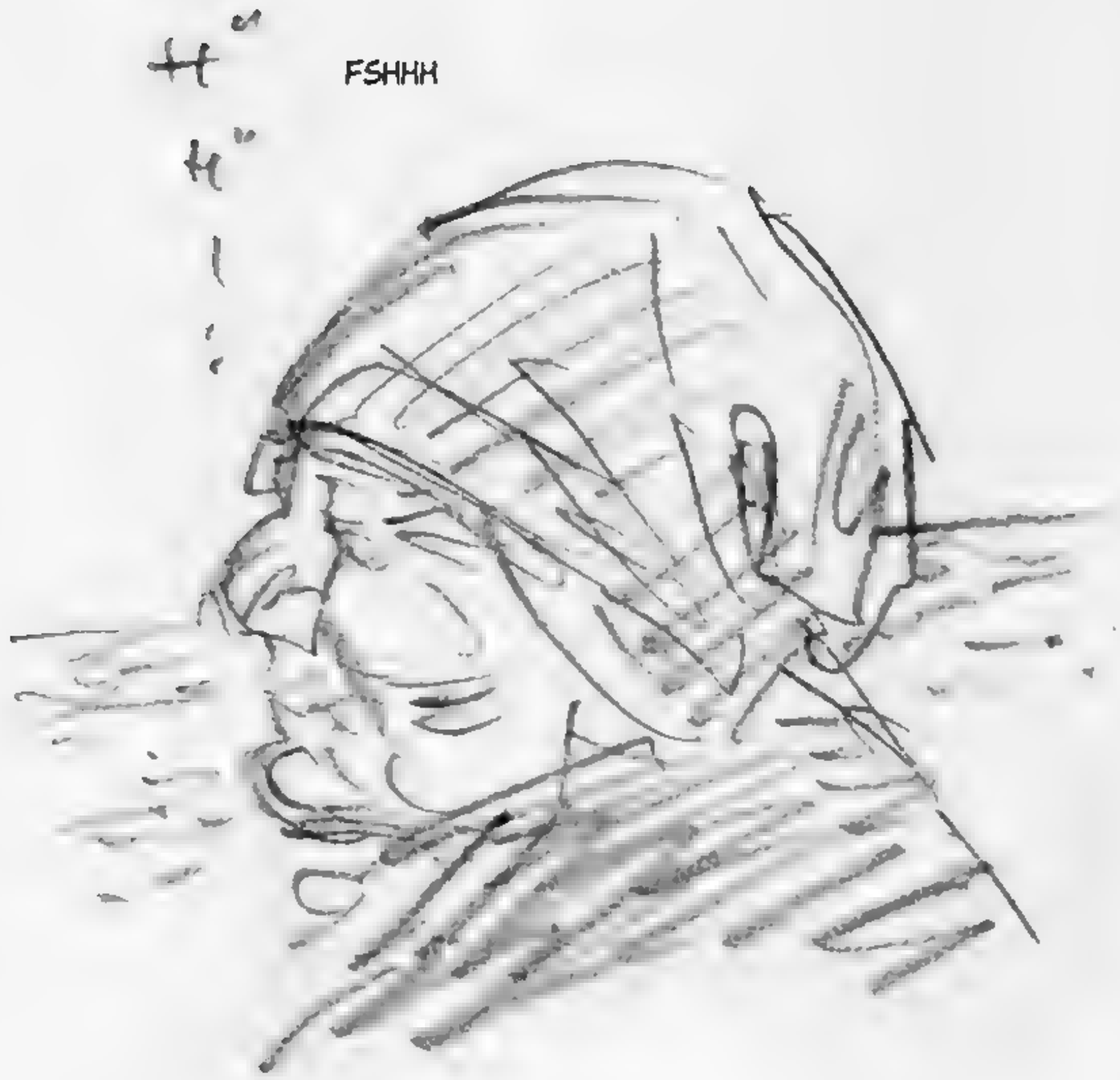

MIMA-SAKA'S SO FAR FROM THE OCEAN.
THANK YOU, MATA-HACHI.
I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO SEE IT.
I NEVER WOULD HAVE SEEN THE OCEAN IF I HADN'T SET OUT ON THIS JOURNEY.

MATA-HACHI...

NO ONE IS TRULY STRONG IN THIS WORLD.

SOME STRIVE TO BE STRONG...

THAT'S ALL...


FSHHH

#273 Mother and Child

TWENTY YEARS AGO...

MIYAMOTO VILLAGE IN MIMASAKA...

THAT OSUGI WILL BE FINE.
I HOPE SHE'LL BE OKAY...
HOW SAD.
MASTER HON'IDEN PASSED AWAY SO SUDDENLY.

SHE'S LOOKING RIGHT AT YOU.
OH NO...

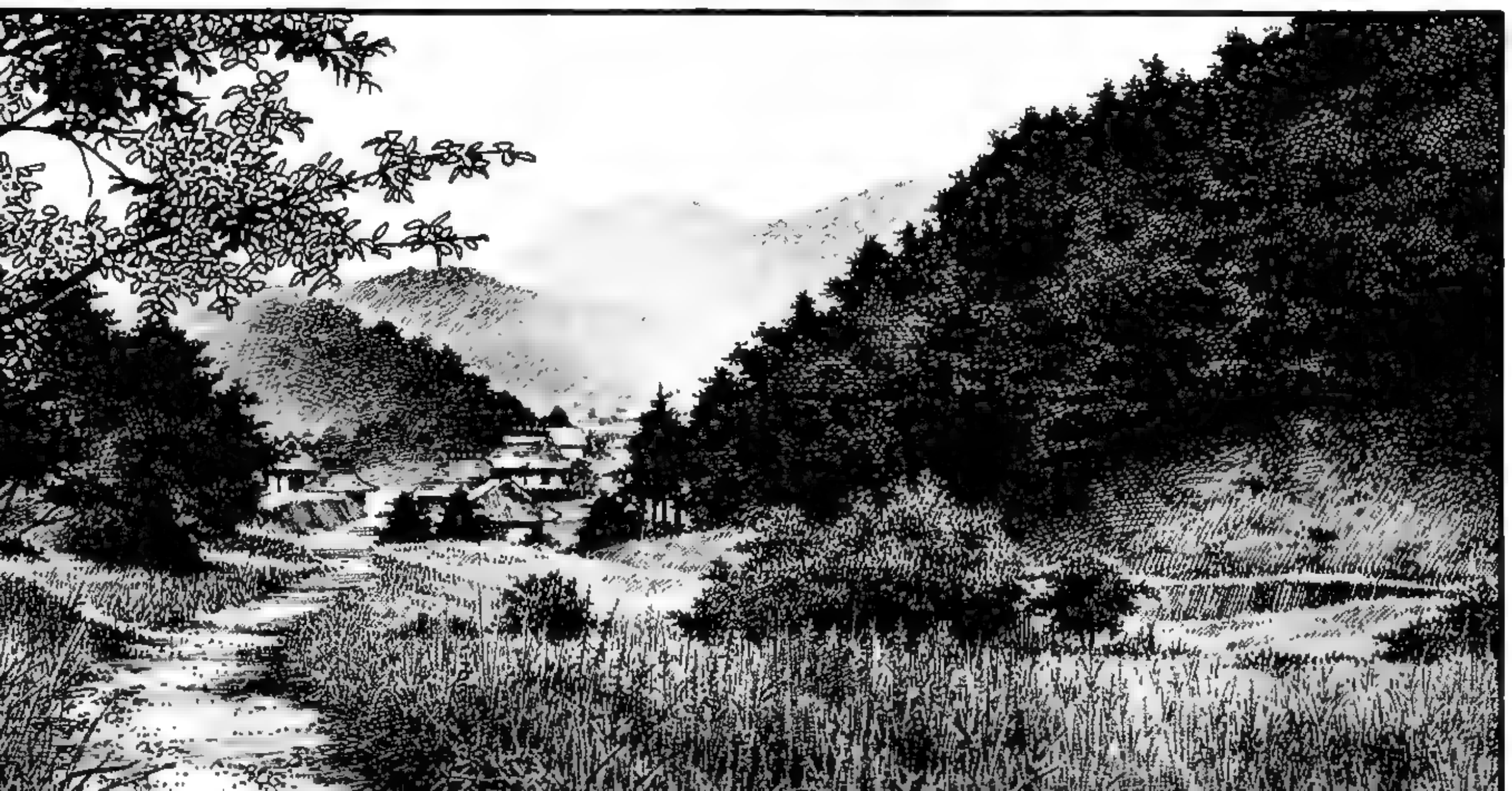
GLARE

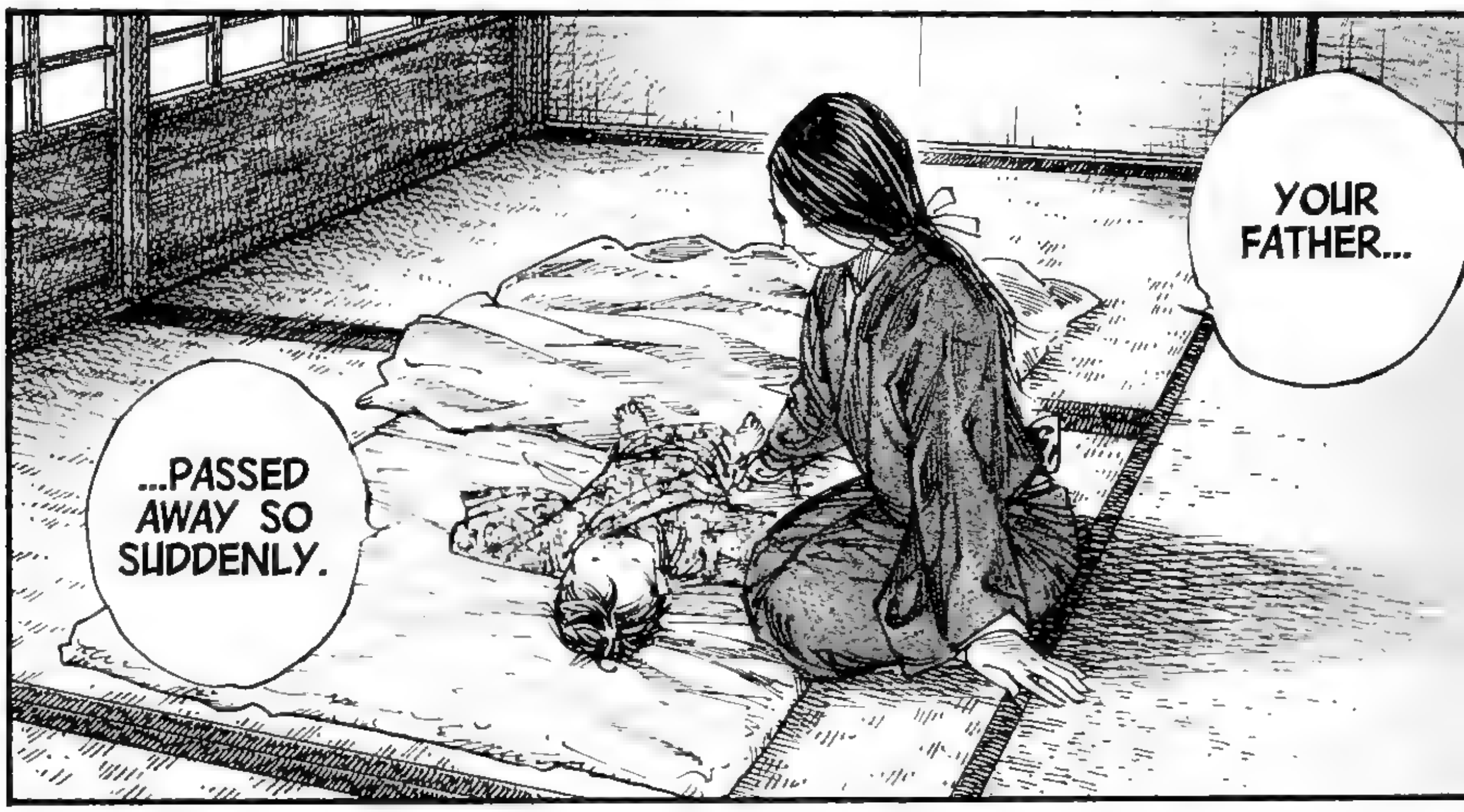
SHE'S STRONGER THAN MOST MEN.
THE SHREW OF THIS VILLAGE.

YIKES.
SHE'S STILL LOOKING.

AND IT'S EVEN WORSE 'CAUSE SHE KNEW US SINCE WE WERE KIDS.
SHE REALLY IS SCARY.

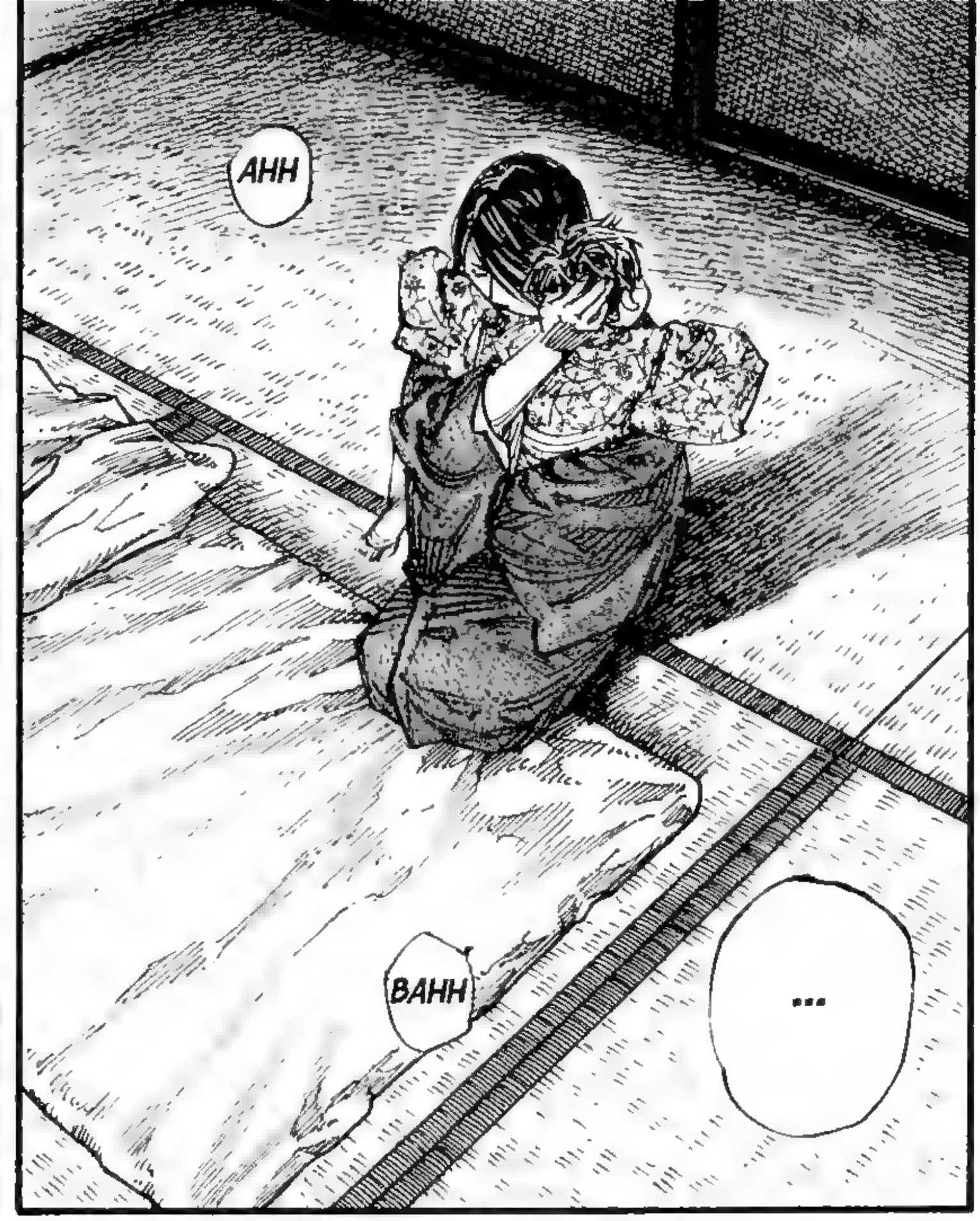
PHEW...

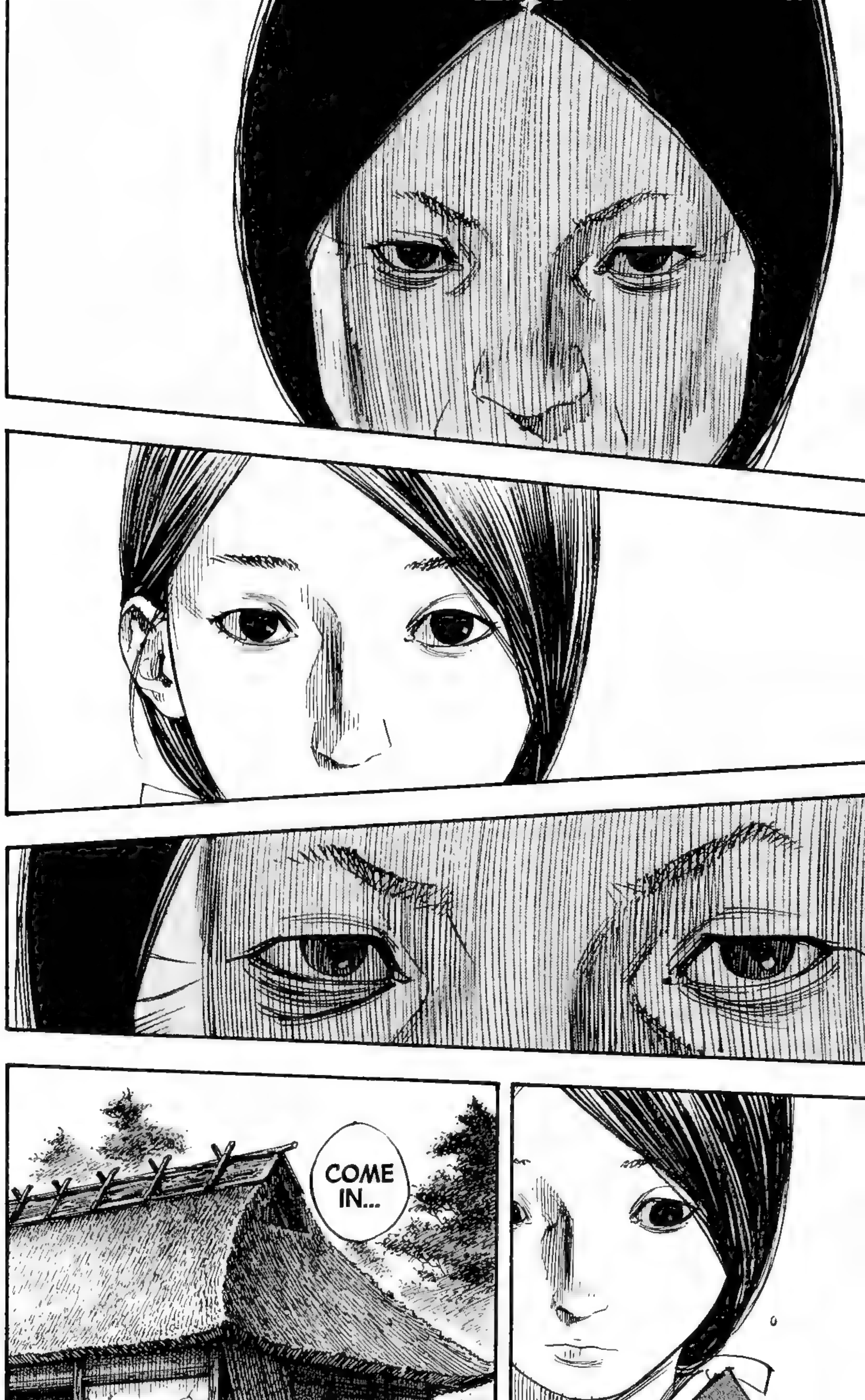



YOUR FATHER...
...PASSED AWAY SO SUDDENLY.

AHH
YOU'LL NEVER GET TO KNOW HIM.
MATA-ICHI.
AHH

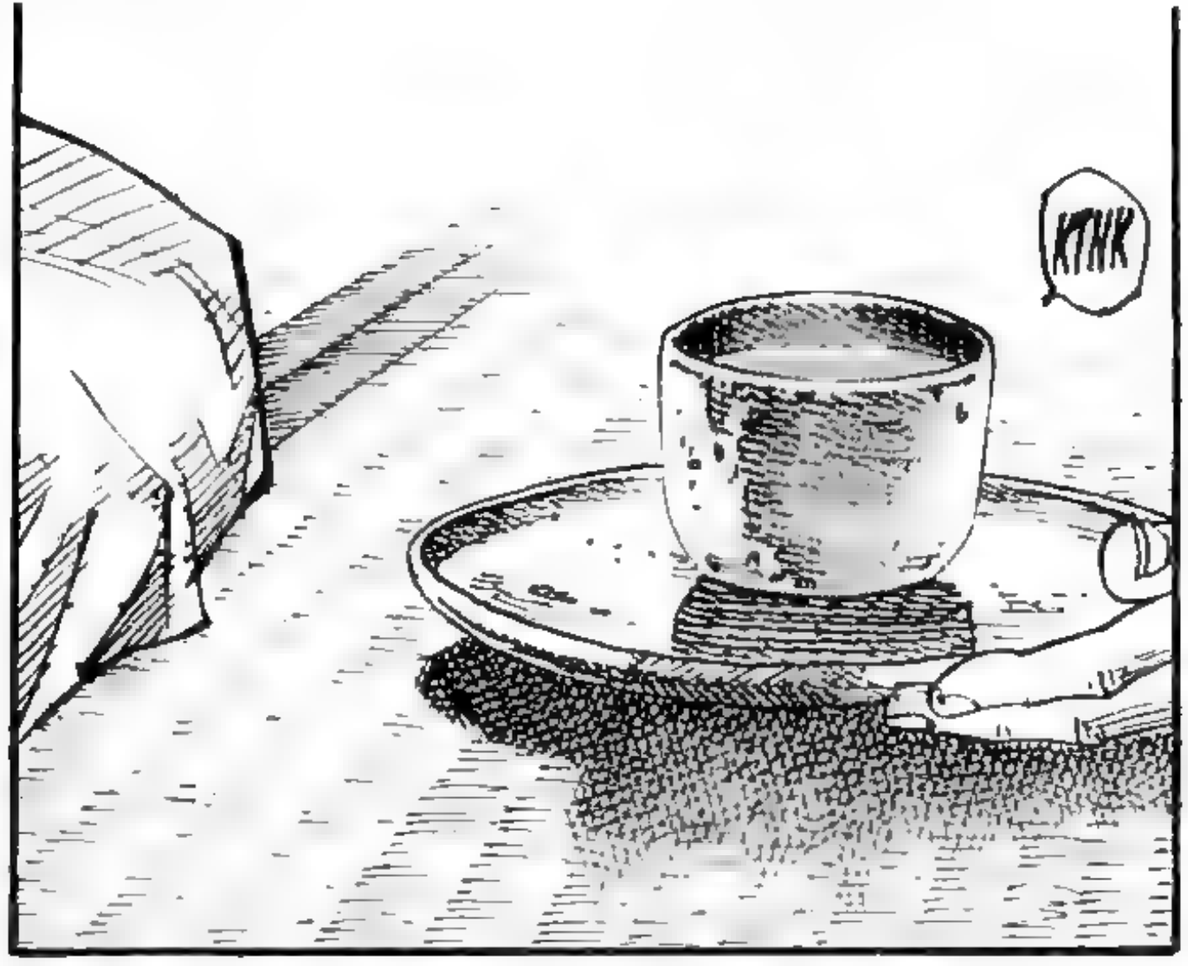
EXCUSE ME.

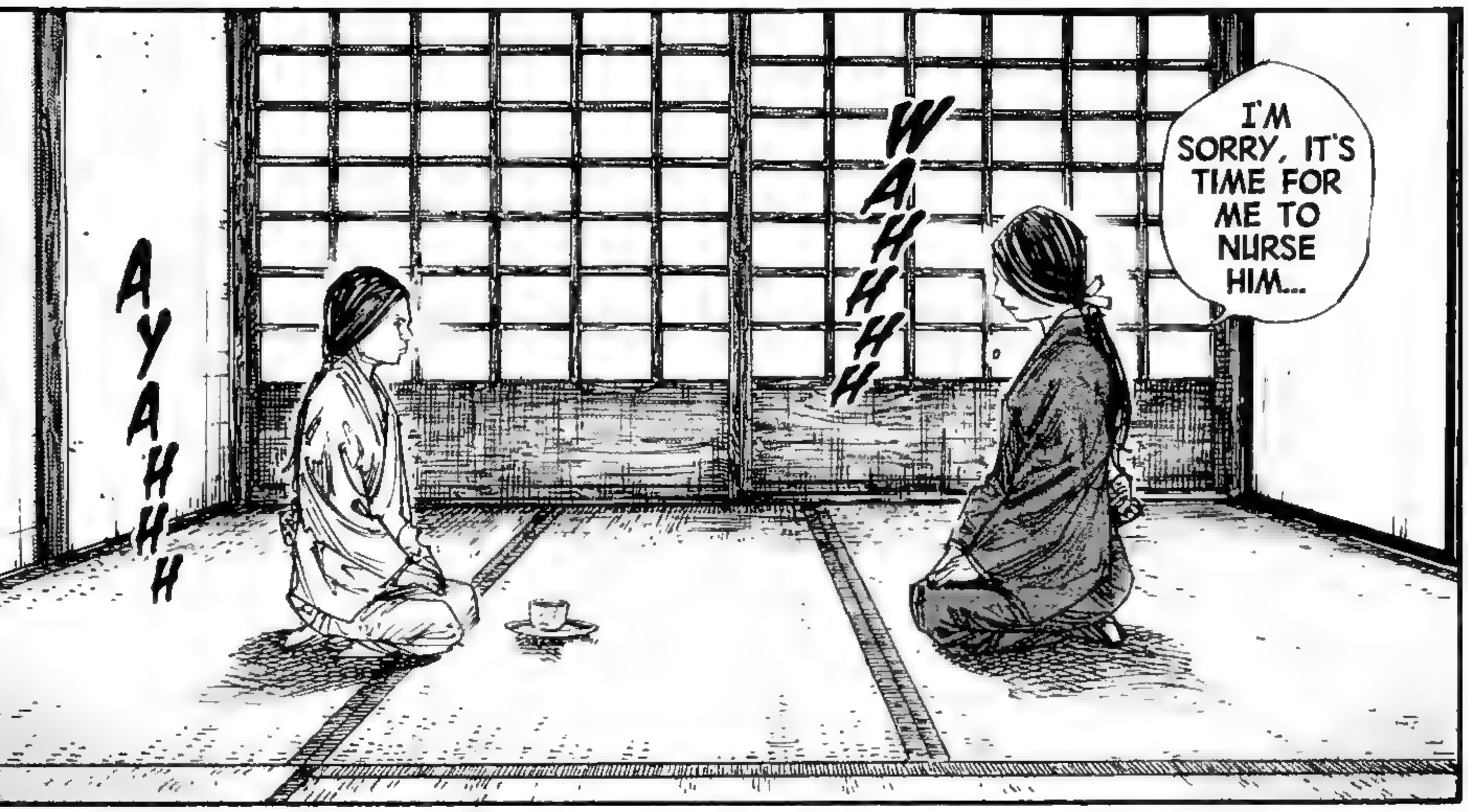

AHH
BAHH
...

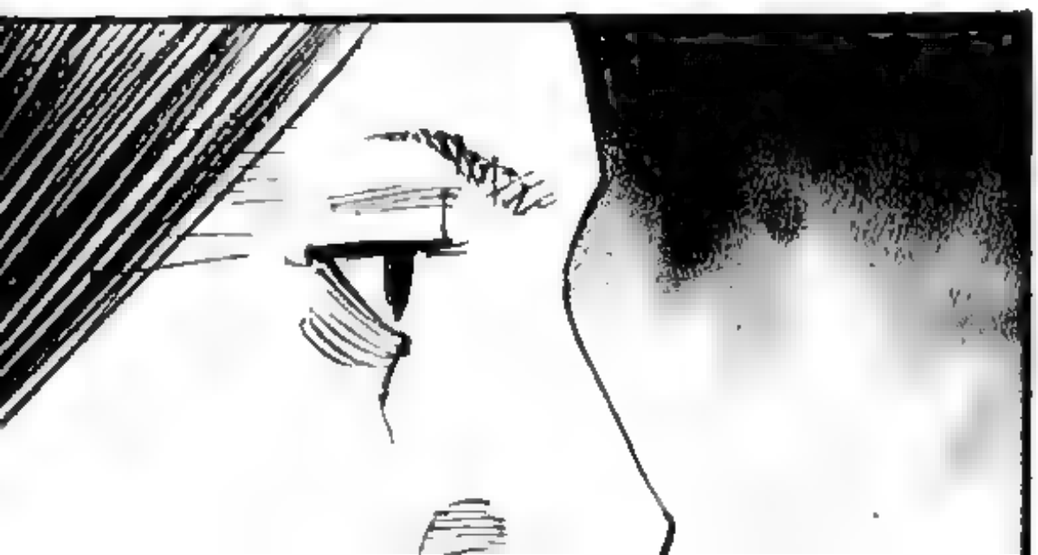

COME IN...

WAHHH

WAIEEE


KTNK


AYAHHH
WAHHHH
I'M SORRY, IT'S TIME FOR ME TO NURSE HIM...



HERE YOU GO...
OKAY ...

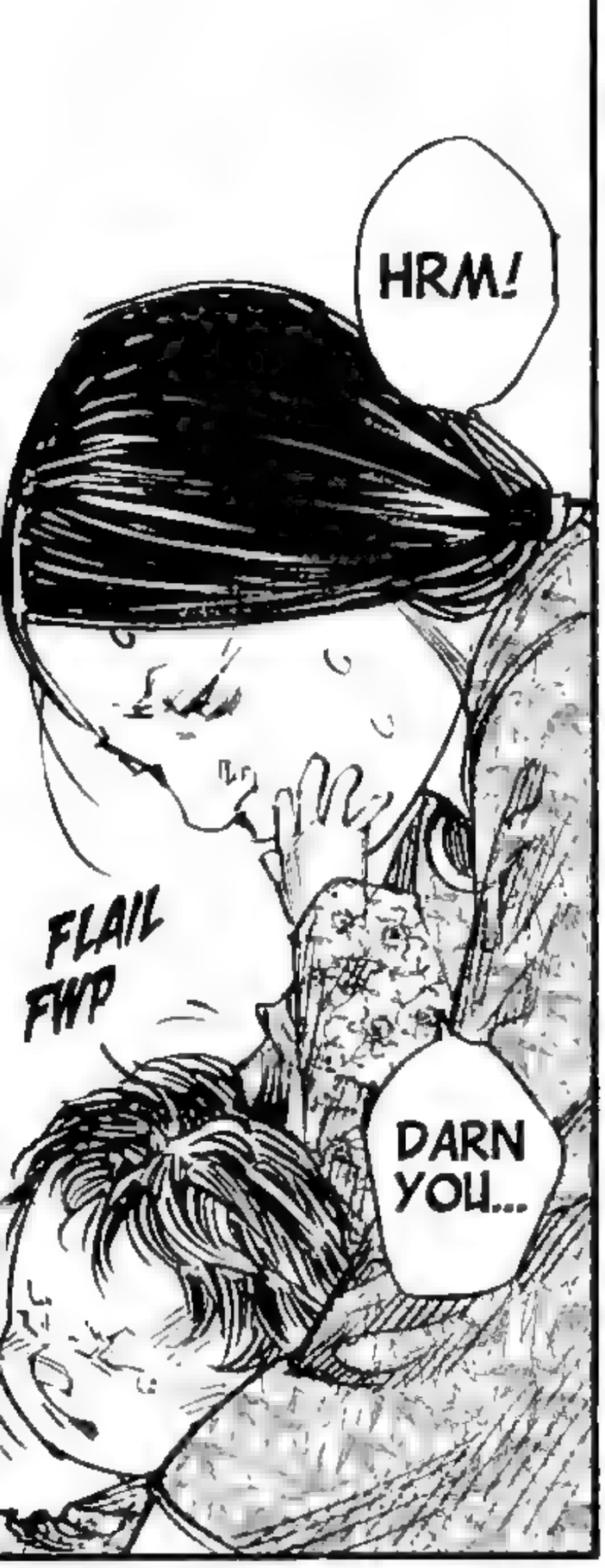
WAHH

IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME.
GAAH
I'M SORRY.

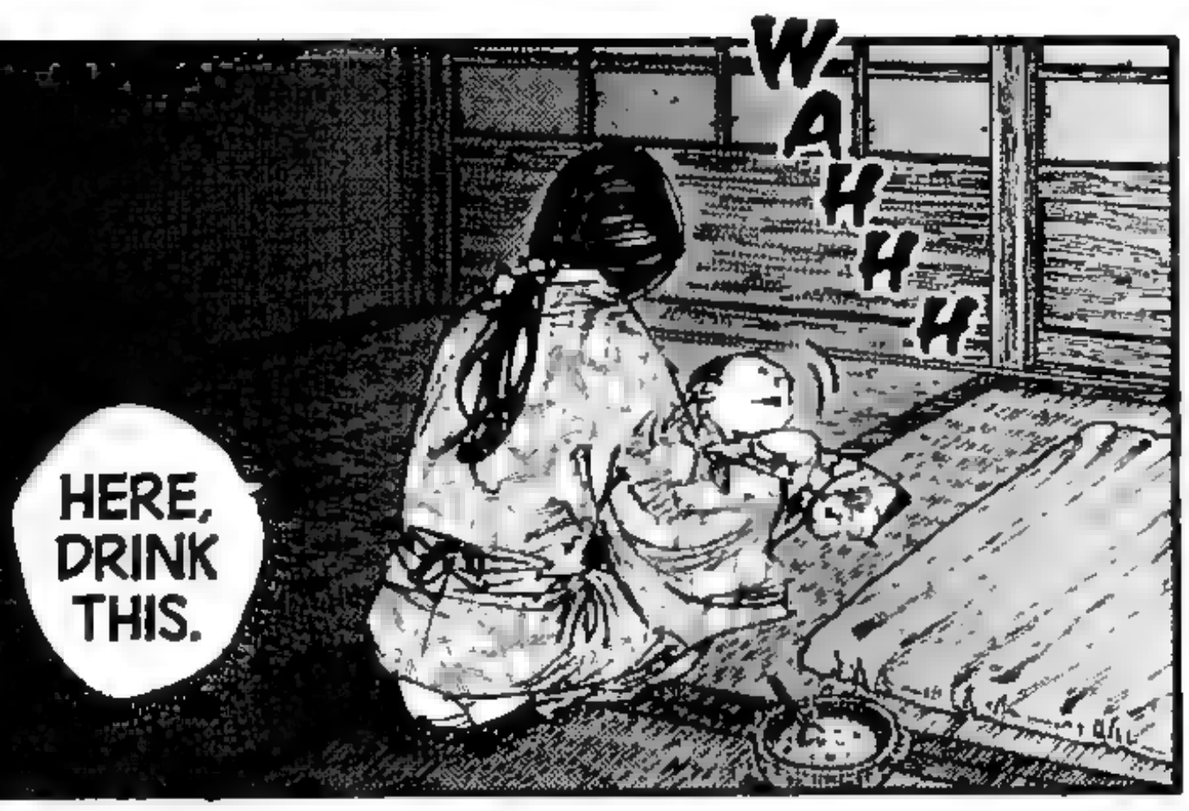
PLEASE GIVE ME THAT CHILD.

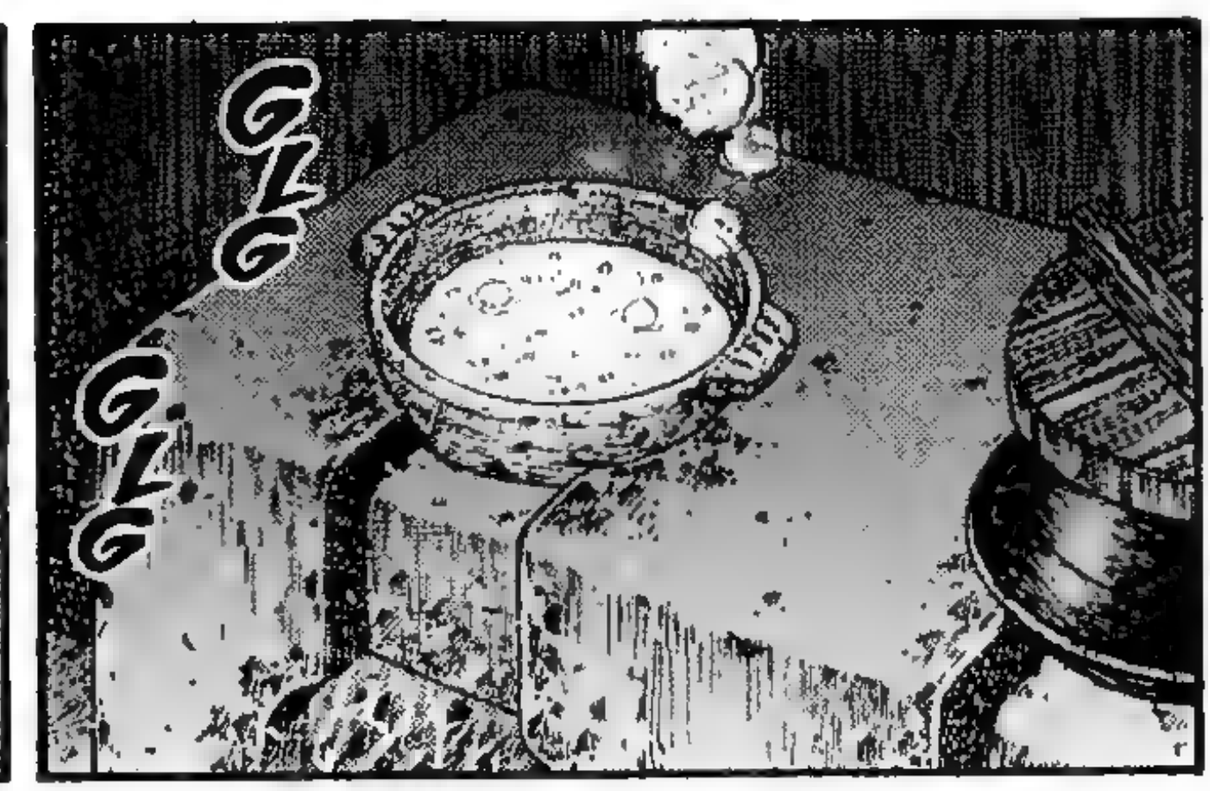
I HAVE NO CHILDREN OF MY OWN.
PLEASE DO NOT ALLOW THE HON'IDEN FAMILY LINE COME TO AN END.

FSSSHHHHH

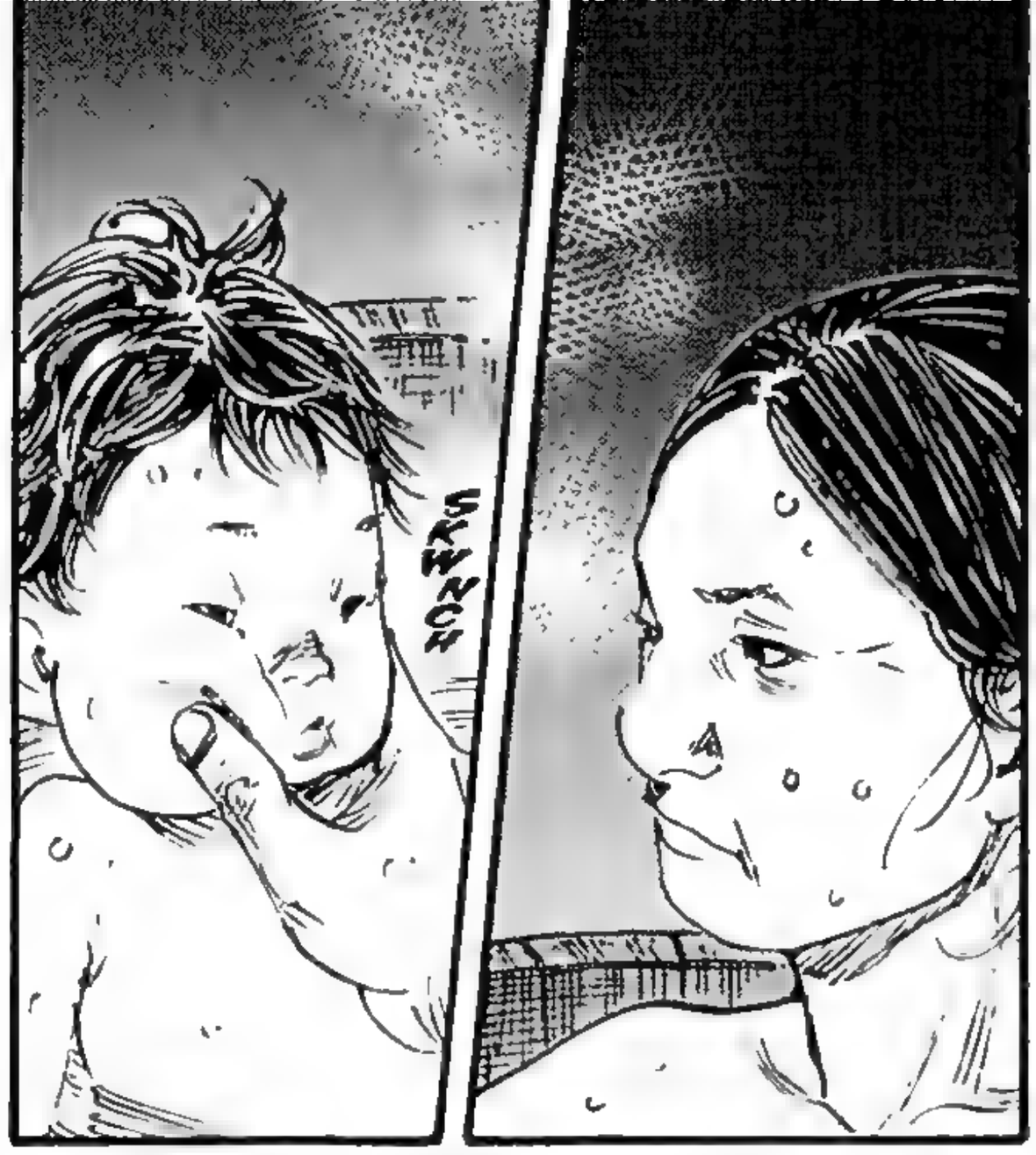

HRM!
FLAIL FWP
DARN YOU...

YOUR NEW NAME.
WAHHHH
AYAHHHH
YOU MUST HATE IT ALL.


WAHHHH
HERE, DRINK THIS.


GLG GLG

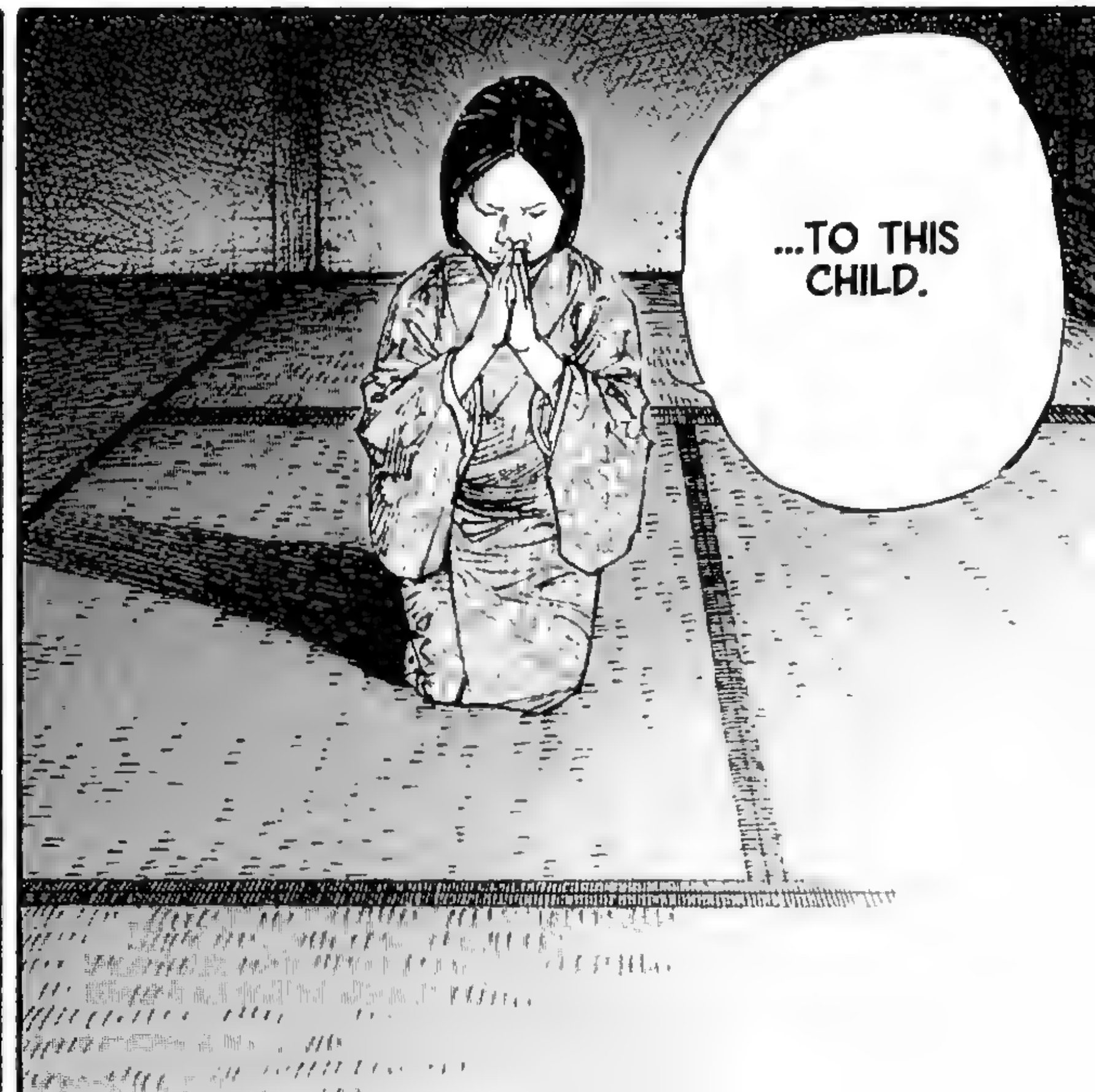
WAYAHH
WAIEEEE


NOPEAU

DON'T WANT SEE.

I WILL DEDICATE MY LIFE...
OH, ANCESTORS...

WAHH
WAHH
I DON'T WANNA SEE.


...TO THIS CHILD.

YOUR FUTURE...

...SHALL BE WIDE OPEN.

KOFF

...

...AS YOUR MOTHER.

WAHHH

YOU MAY BE UNHAPPY NOW...

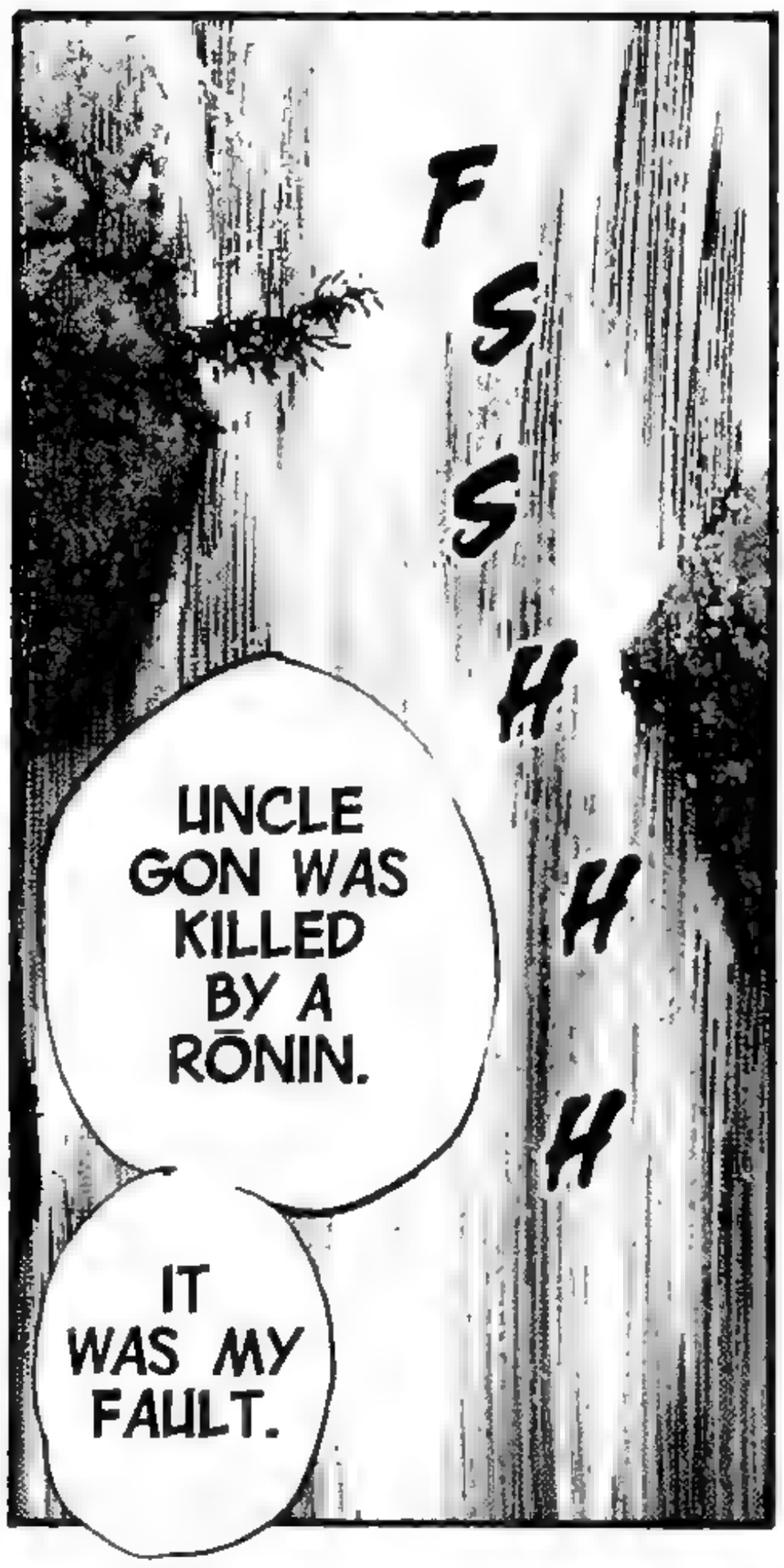
...BUT I'M HERE FOR YOU.

LIKE THE CHARACTER FOR EIGHT, "HACHI."

MATA-HACHI.

YOUR NAME SHALL BE HON'IDEN MATAHACHI.

.....


F
S
S
H
H
H
UNCLE GON WAS KILLED BY A RŌNIN.
IT WAS MY FAULT.

MOTHER...

WHAT'RE YOU DOING THERE?

UNCLE GON...

.....

.....

I WAS THE ONE WHO BETRAYED HER.
I WAS WITH ANOTHER WOMAN NAMED OKŌ.
AND OTSŪ WAS NEVER TO BLAME.

AND SO WAS *THAT.*

THAT WAS A LIE.

THAT'S NOT ALL.

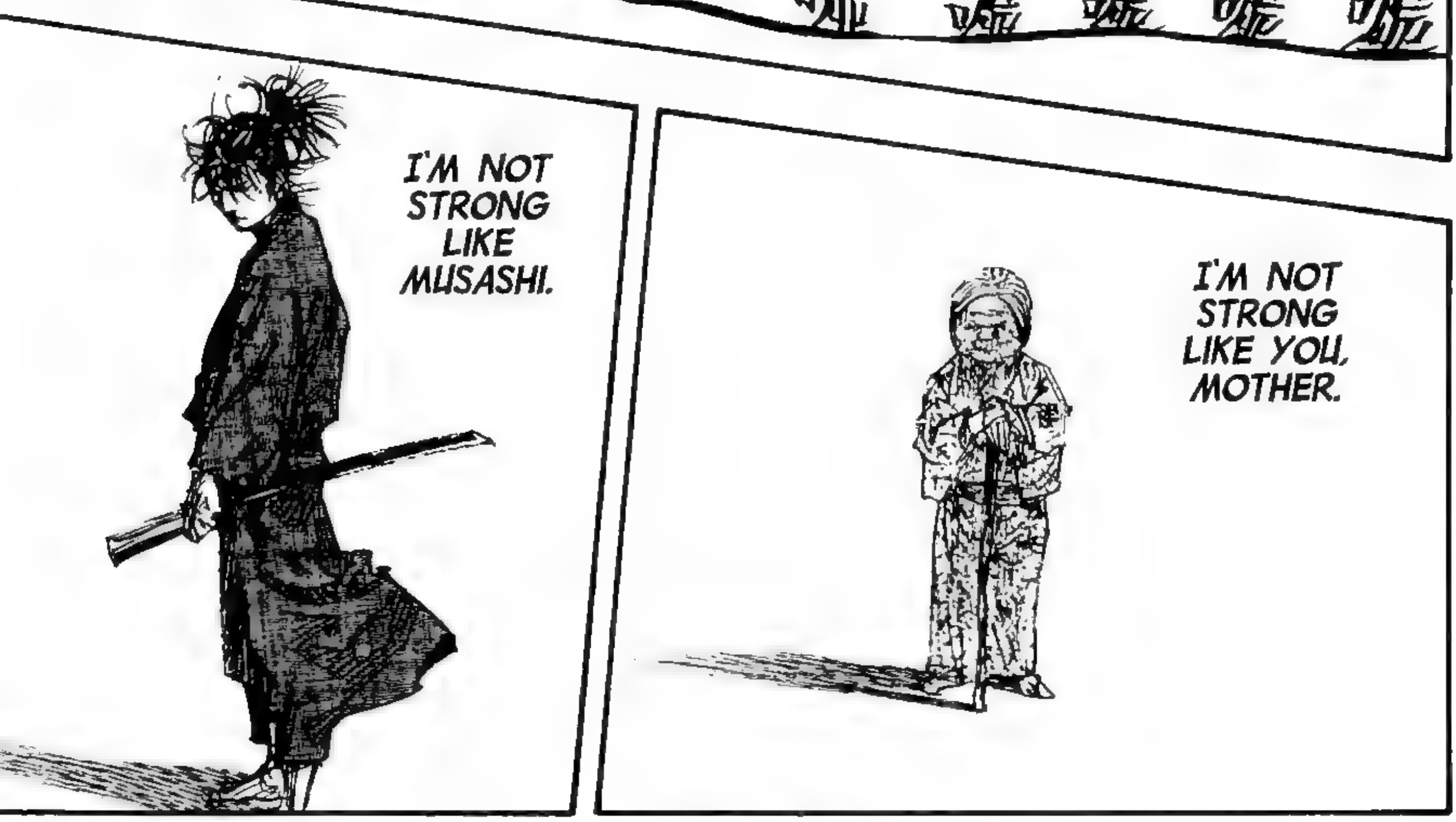
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING ?

AN AVALANCHE OF LIES.

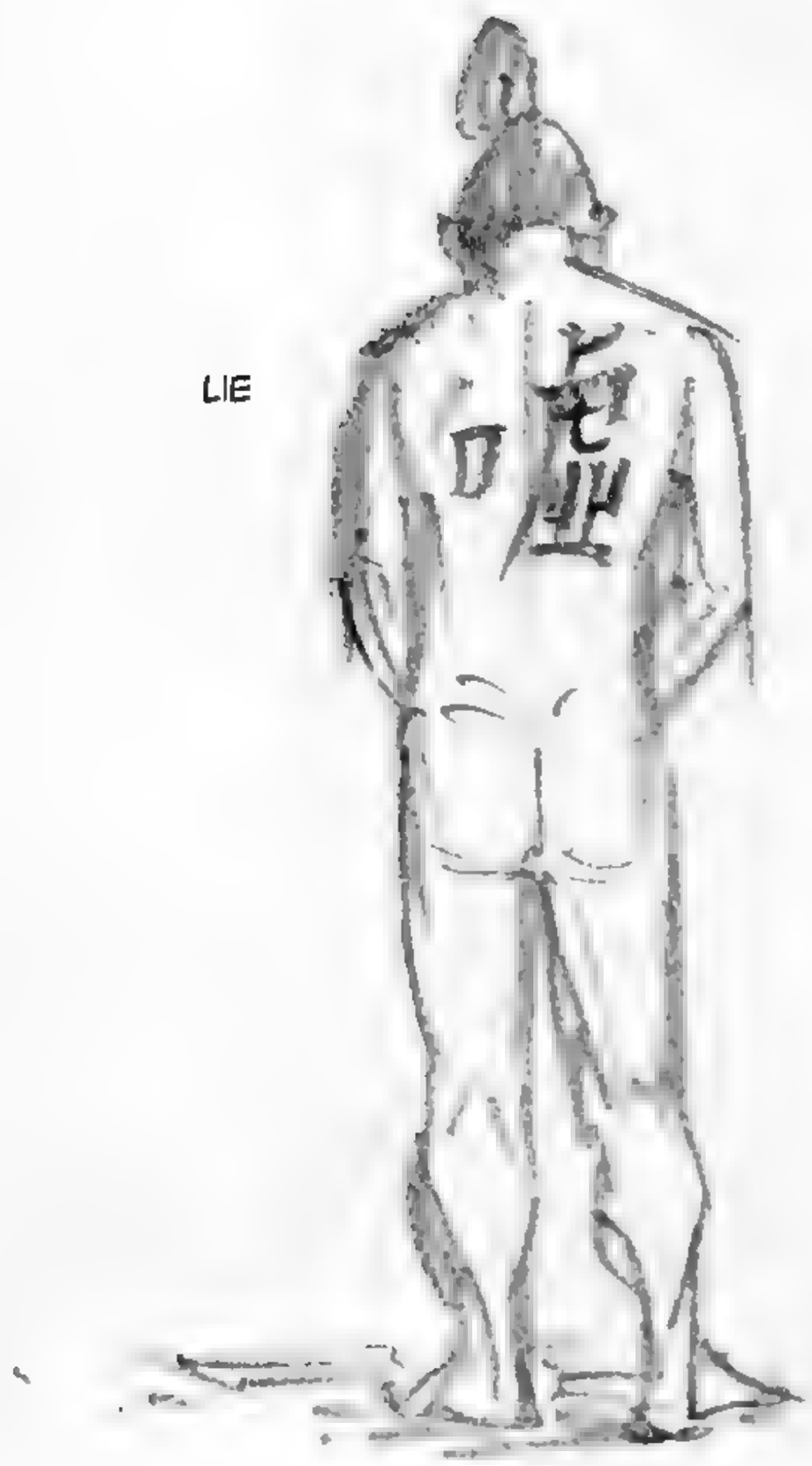
LIES BEGET LIES.

LIES LIES LIES.

嘘 嘘 嘘 嘘 嘘



I'M WEAK...
FSSHHH


LIE

KTNKK

KTNKK

SHUF

SHUF

HUF

MOTHER ...

HUF

HUF

F S S H H H

ONE MORE STEP...

...AND WE CAN END IT ALL...

BRR

BRR

#274 | Mother

....!!

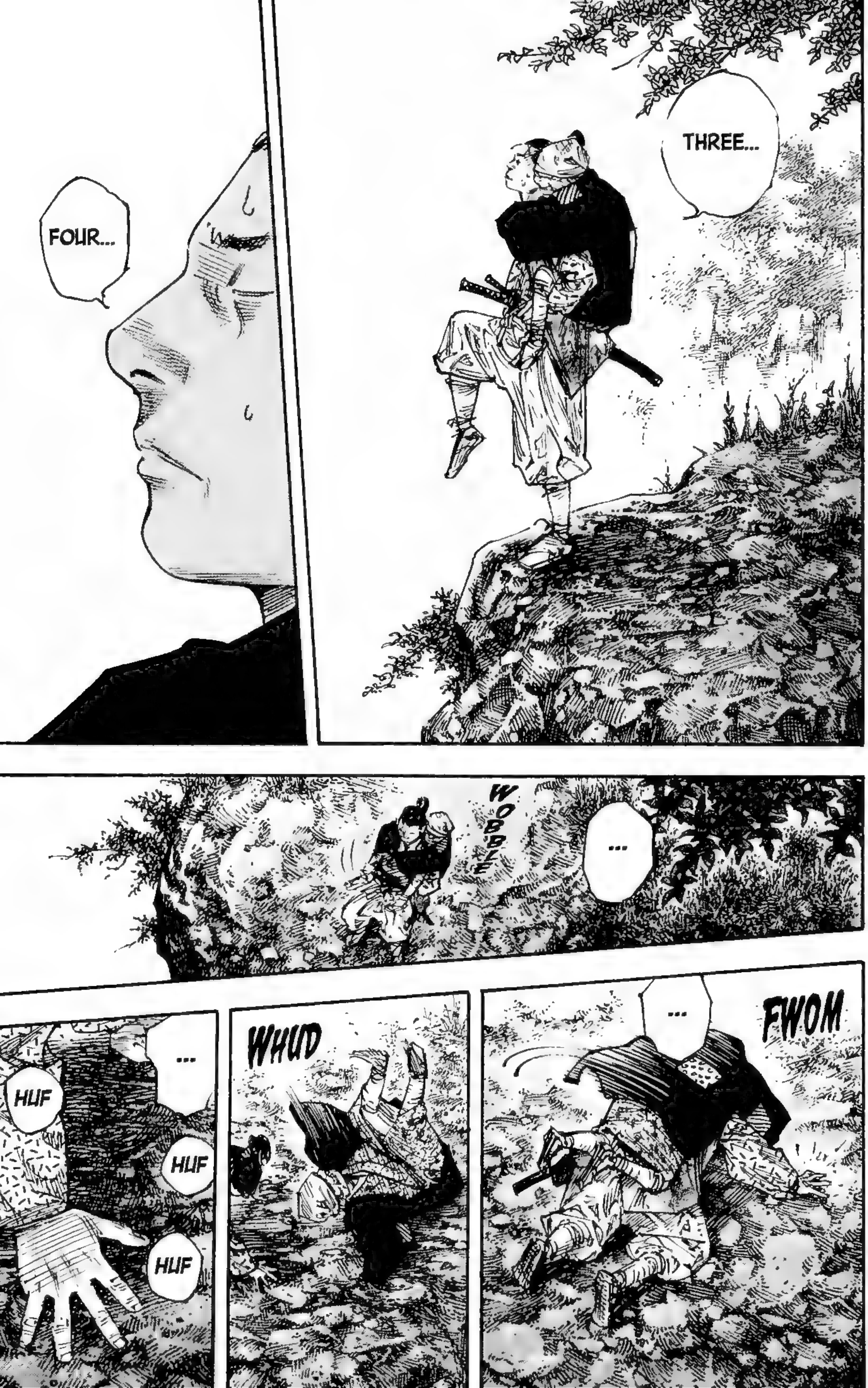
I UNDER-STAND.

ALL RIGHT...

ON THE COUNT OF THREE!

ONE...
FSSSHHHH
TWO...

I'M FORTUNATE TO DIE ON MY OWN SON'S SHOULDERS.
...
MOTHER ...!!


FOUR...
THREE...
WOBBLE
...
HUF
HUF
HUF
...
WHUD
...
FWOM

OW...
HM?
I'M SO WEAK.
DAMN IT.
WEAK!
I CAN'T STAND HOW WEAK I AM!
I'M PATHETIC.
IF I PEELED OFF EVERY LIE I'VE TOLD...
...THERE'D BE NOTHING LEFT AT THE CORE!

NOT OTSŪ.
I DIDN'T WANT ANYONE TO KNOW HOW EMPTY I TRULY AM!
NOT TAKEZŌ!
NOT EVEN MY OWN MOTHER!
WEAK!
WEAK!
WEAK WEAK WEAK!

YOUR FUTURE IS WIDE OPEN.

LIKE THE CHARACTER FOR EIGHT, HACHI.

SHUF

DON'T GIVE UP.

DON'T YOU GIVE UP, MATA-HACHI.

I TOLD YOU.

SEE...

VERY GOOD, MATAHACHI.

YOU AREN'T WEAK ANYMORE.

THOSE WHO ARE TRULY WEAK WILL NEVER ADMIT IT.

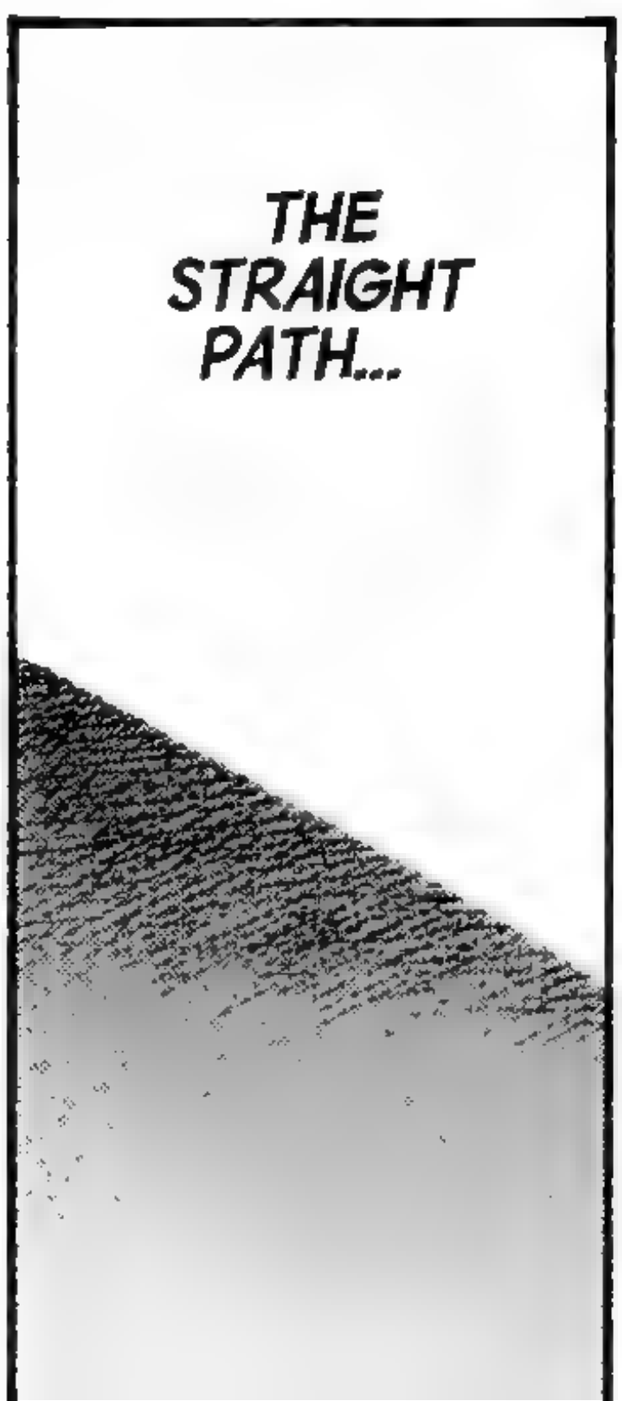
THAT'S WHAT IT MEANS...

...TO STRIVE TO BE STRONGER.

MOTHER ...
YOU ALL RIGHT?

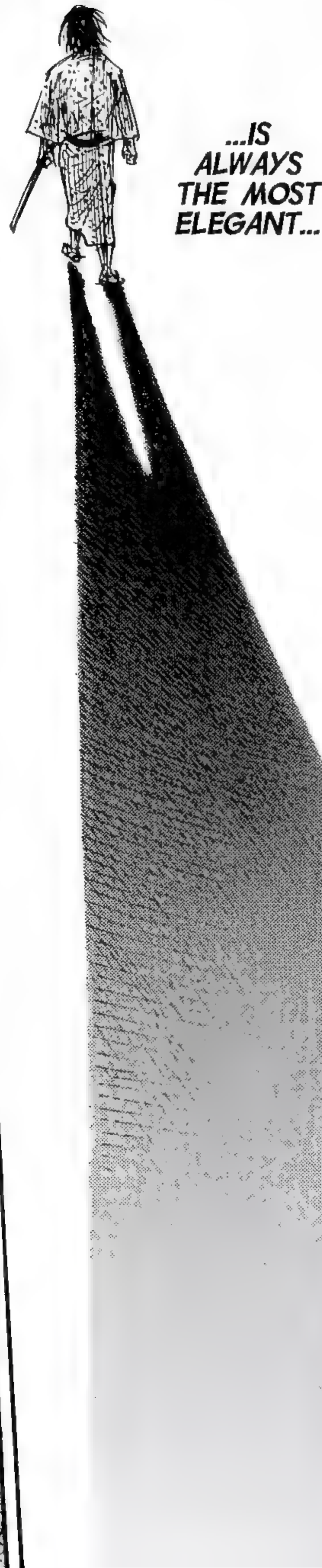
KOFF
KOFF

KLNCH
KLNCH KLNCH
...


THE STRAIGHT PATH...

MOTHER ...

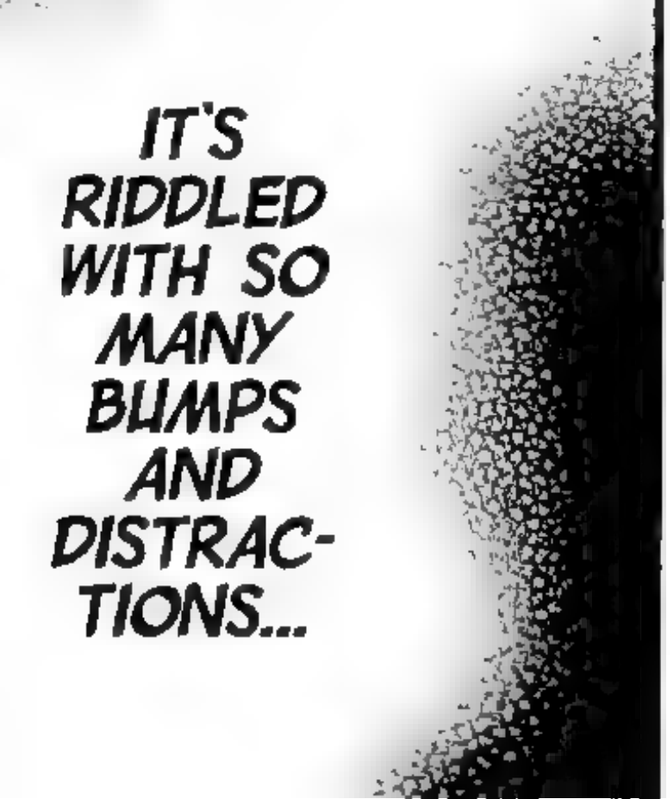
BUT THAT'S NOT HOW THINGS USUALLY WORK.


...IS ALWAYS THE MOST ELEGANT...

HESITATION...
MISTAKES...
THE LONG WAY AROUND.

THE PATH YOU'VE TREAD...

TAKE A LOOK BACK.
THAT'S JUST FINE.


IT'S RIDDLED WITH SO MANY BUMPS AND DISTRAC-TIONS...

...THE PATH IS AS WIDE AS CAN BE...

...YOU CAN BE THE KINDEST PERSON THERE IS, MATAHACHI.
IT'S ALL RIGHT.
MA...
I PROMISE ...
I'LL MAKE A NAME FOR MYSELF. YOU'LL LIVE AN EASY LIFE!
WITH SUCH A WIDE OPEN PATH...
I COULDN'T DO IT...
NOR THAT TAKEZŌ...

THAT'S THE TYPE OF PERSON WE CAN NEVER BE, MATAHACHI...

...

MOTHER...

YEAH.

WE'RE HERE.

THIS IS MIYAMOTO VILLAGE.

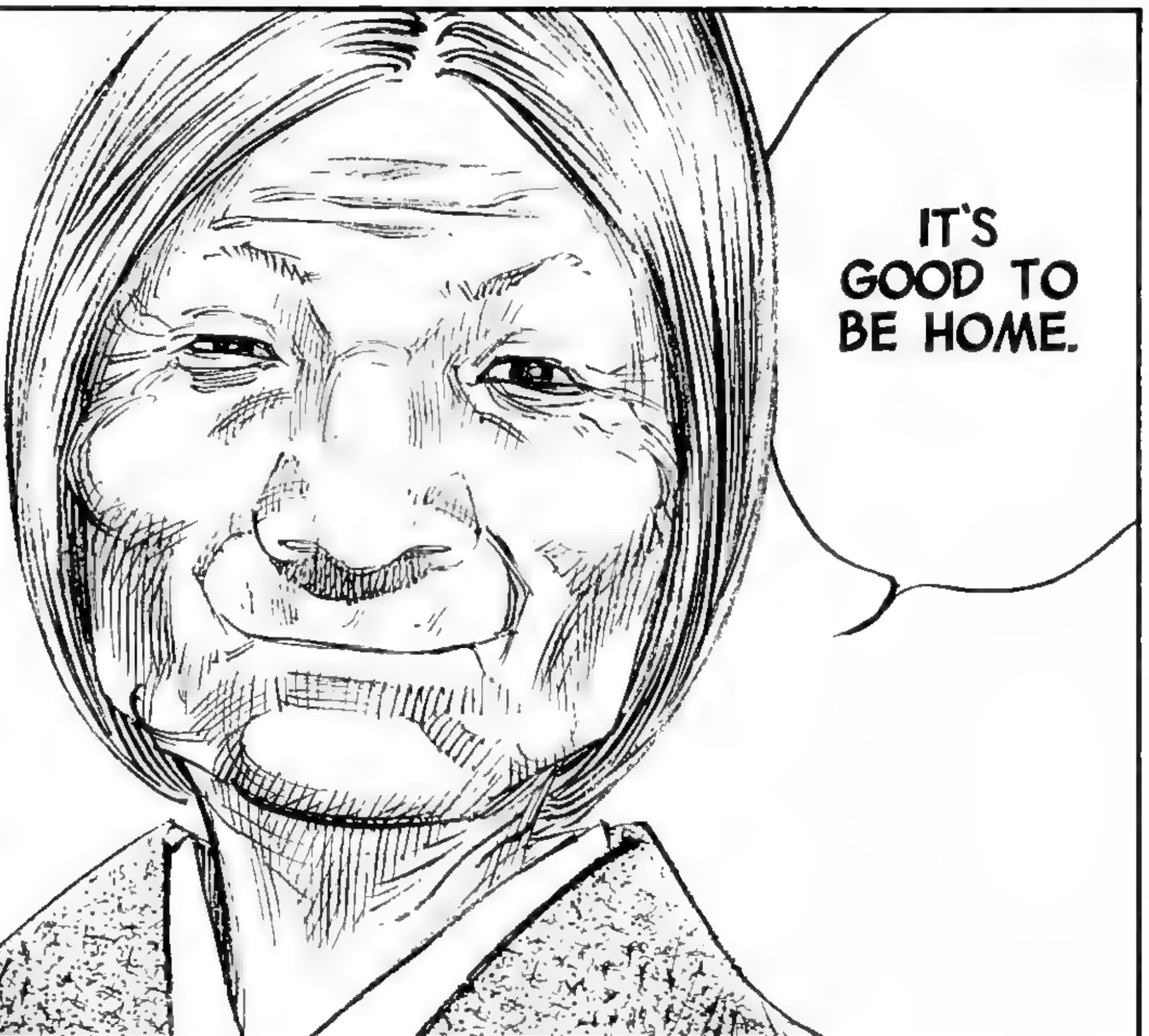
ARE WE THERE YET?

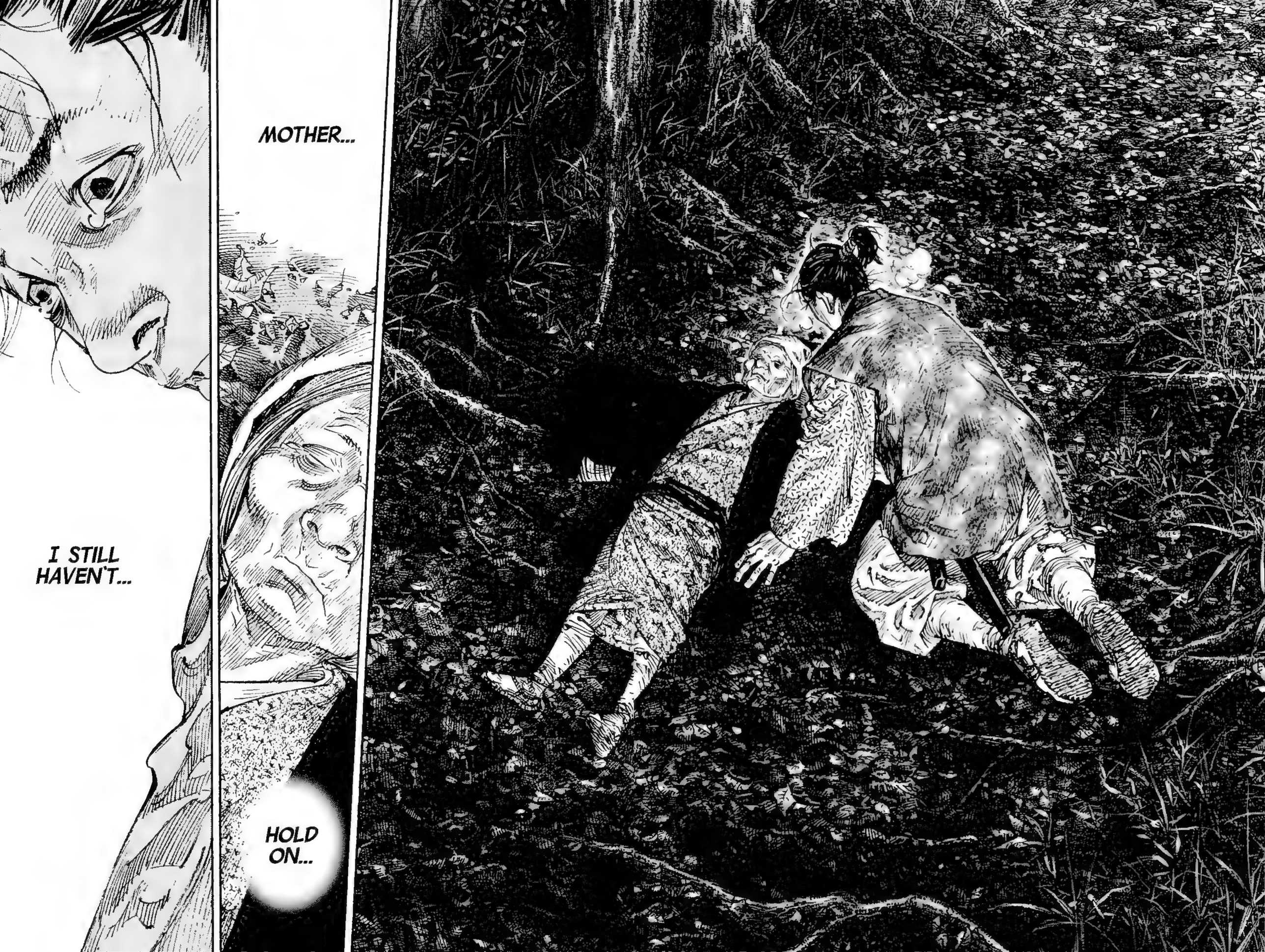
...THE VILLAGE.

MOTHER!

.....

WEL-
COME
HOME!


IT'S GOOD TO BE HOME.


MOTHER...
I STILL HAVEN'T...
HOLD ON...

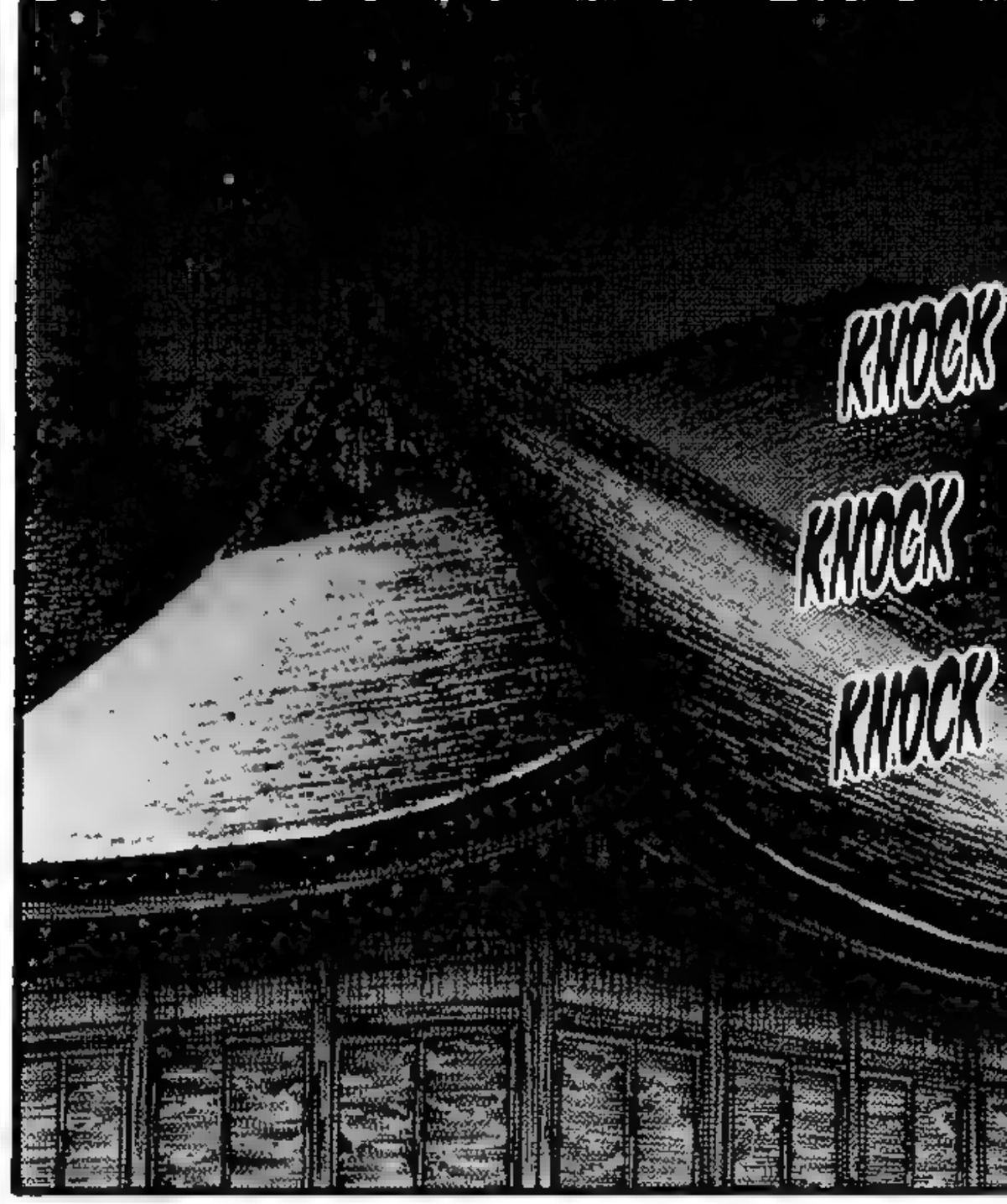
I HAVEN'T DONE ANYTHING FOR YOU YET.

MOTHER...

MOTHER !!

#275 | Liar

HM?
WHO COULD IT BE AT THIS HOUR?


KNOCK
KNOCK
KNOCK

HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF

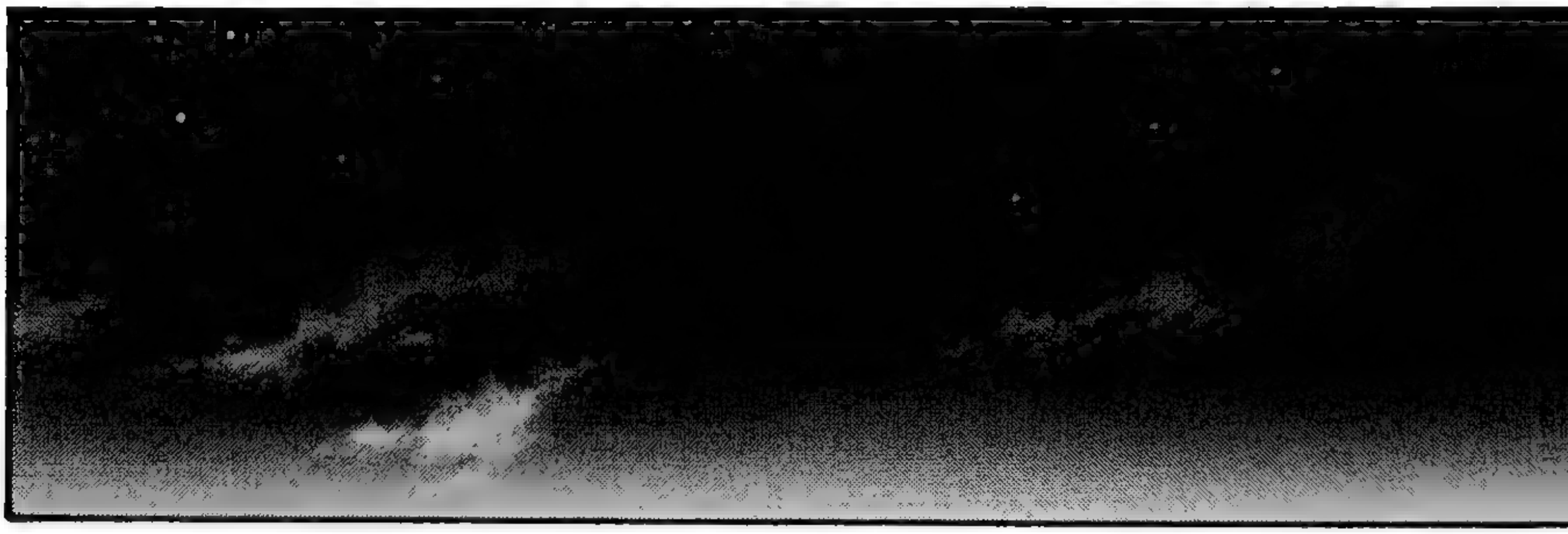
MATA-HACHI!

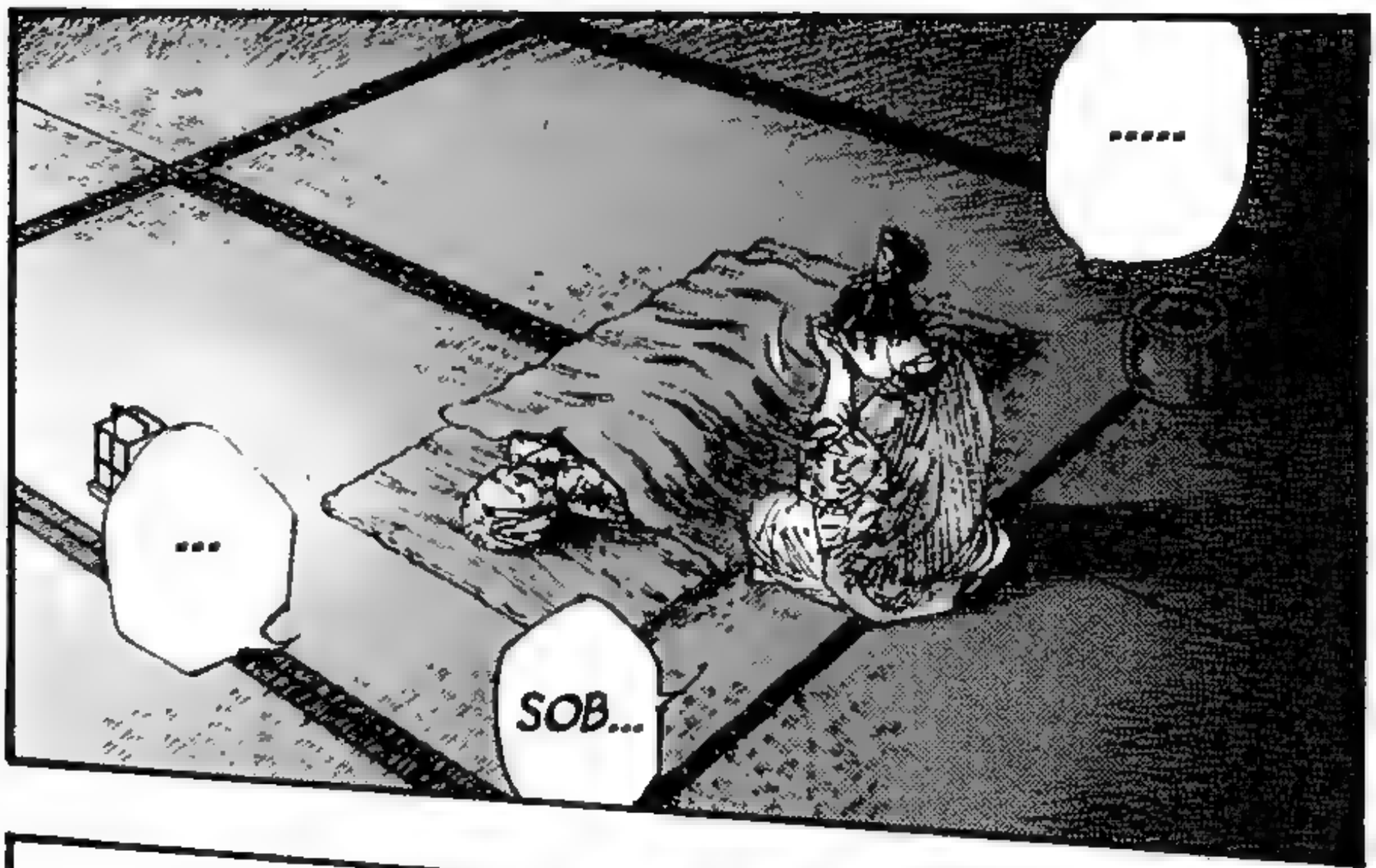
OSUGI...

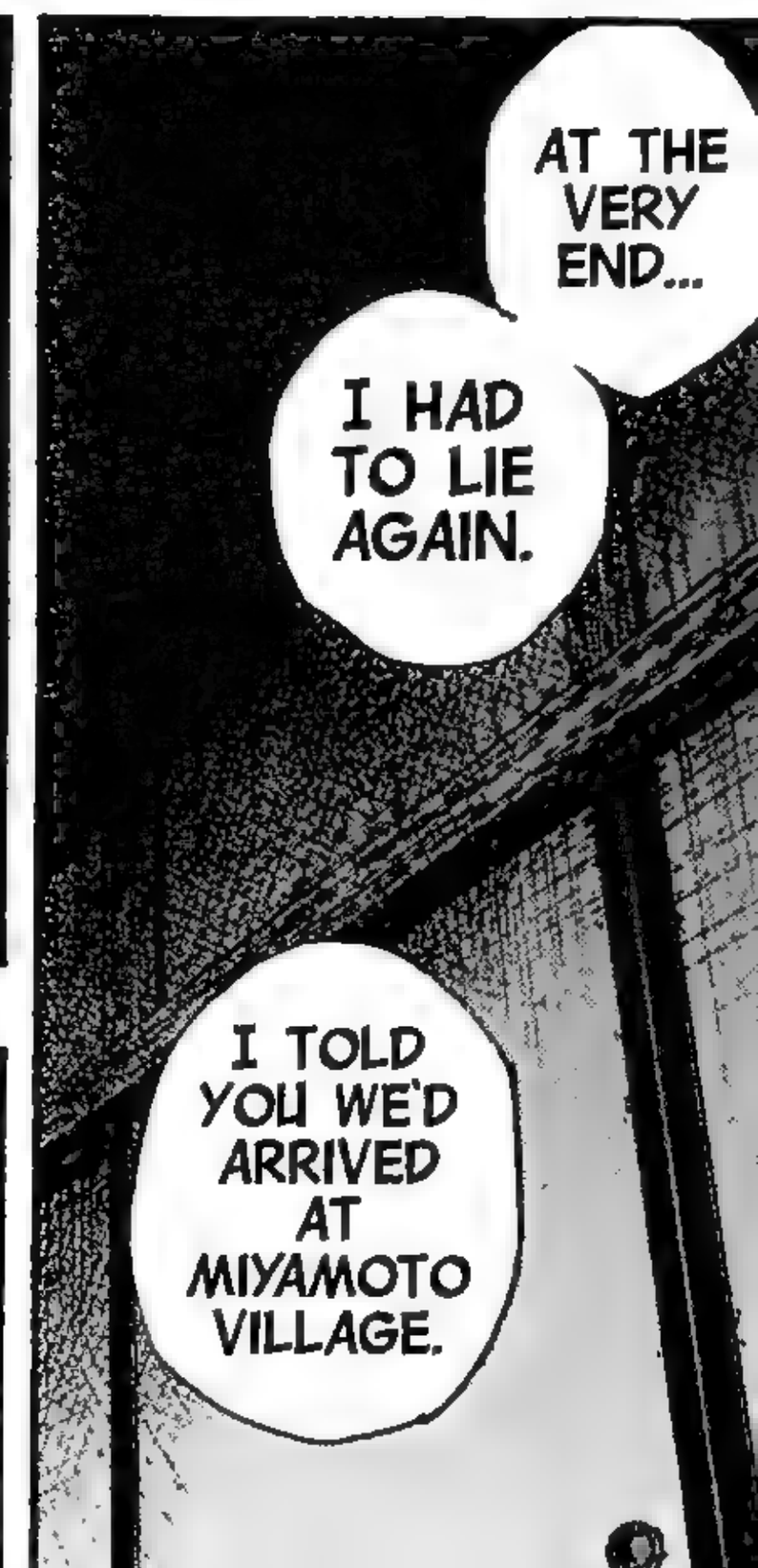
...

OSUGI...
SO YOU DIDN'T MAKE IT SO FAR...
...BEFORE SHE PASSED AWAY.

SHE LOOKS PEACE-FUL.
WE SHALL HOLD THE SERVICE TOMOR-ROW.




.....
...
SOB...

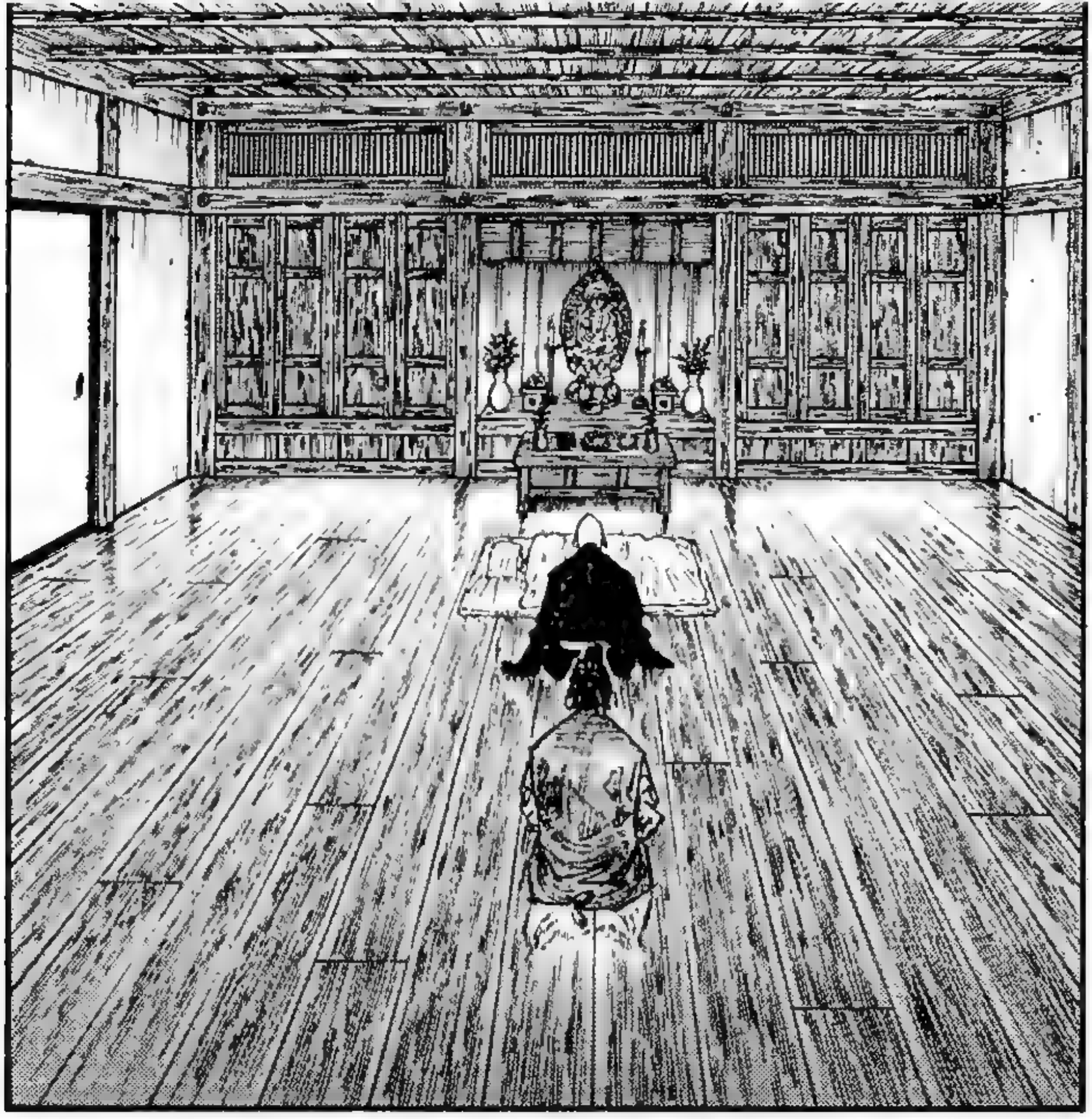

AT THE VERY END...
I HAD TO LIE AGAIN.
I TOLD YOU WE'D ARRIVED AT MIYAMOTO VILLAGE.

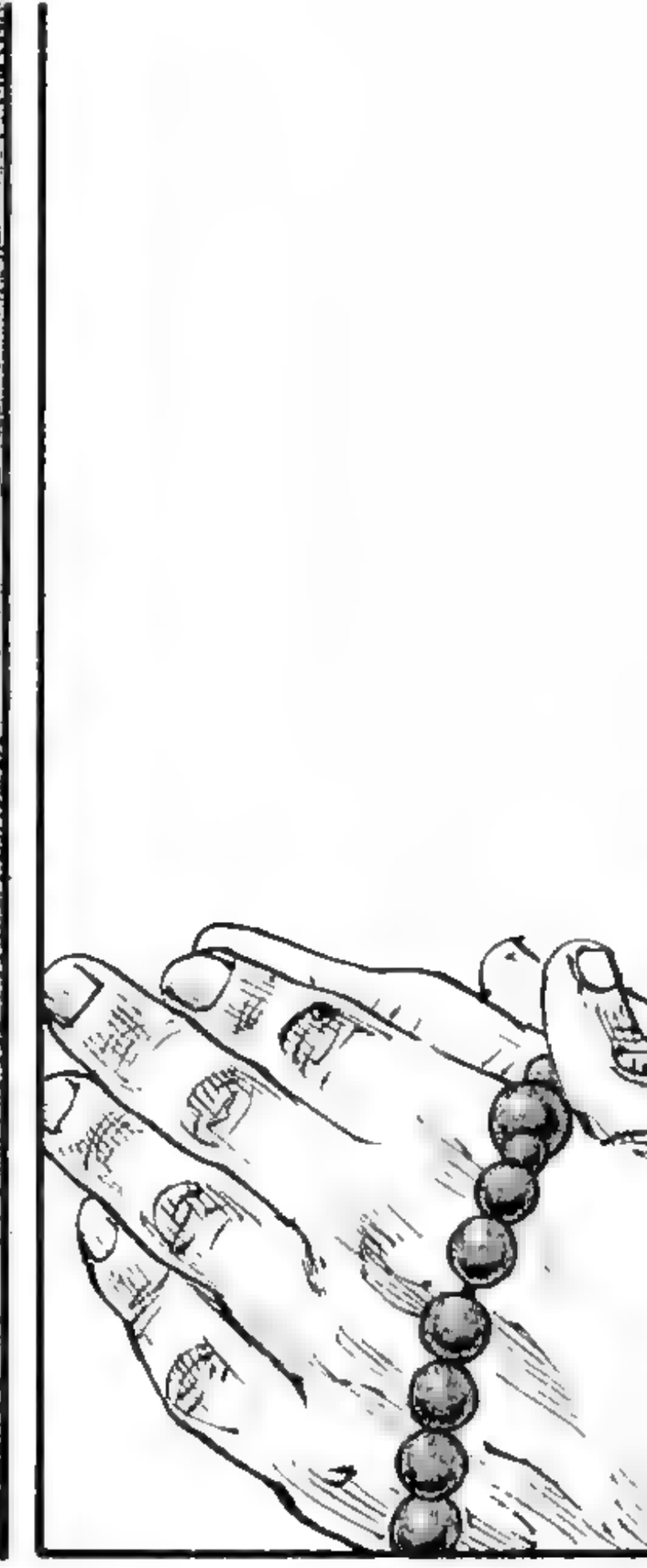
THAT YOU WERE WRONG ABOUT HIM.
...ABOUT TAKEZŌ.
I NEVER WAS ABLE TO TELL YOU...

MAYBE WE'LL EVEN KILL A GENERAL! WE'LL BE THE ENVY OF EVERYONE.

THEY SAY IF YOU PERFORM WELL IN THIS BATTLE, YOU CAN REALLY MAKE SOMETHING OF YOURSELF.

C'MON! COME WITH ME!



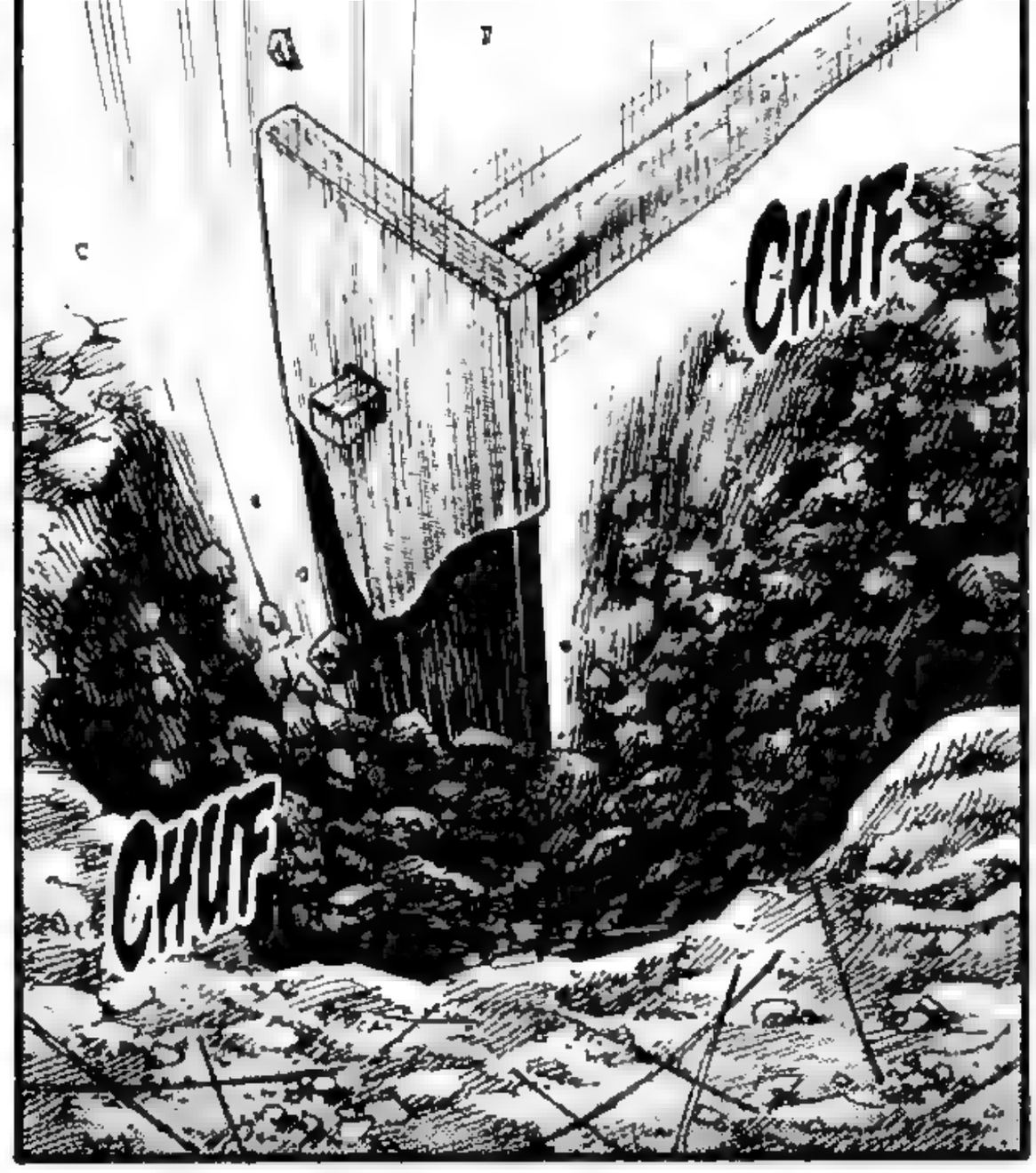


THIS SEEMS LIKE A GOOD PLACE.

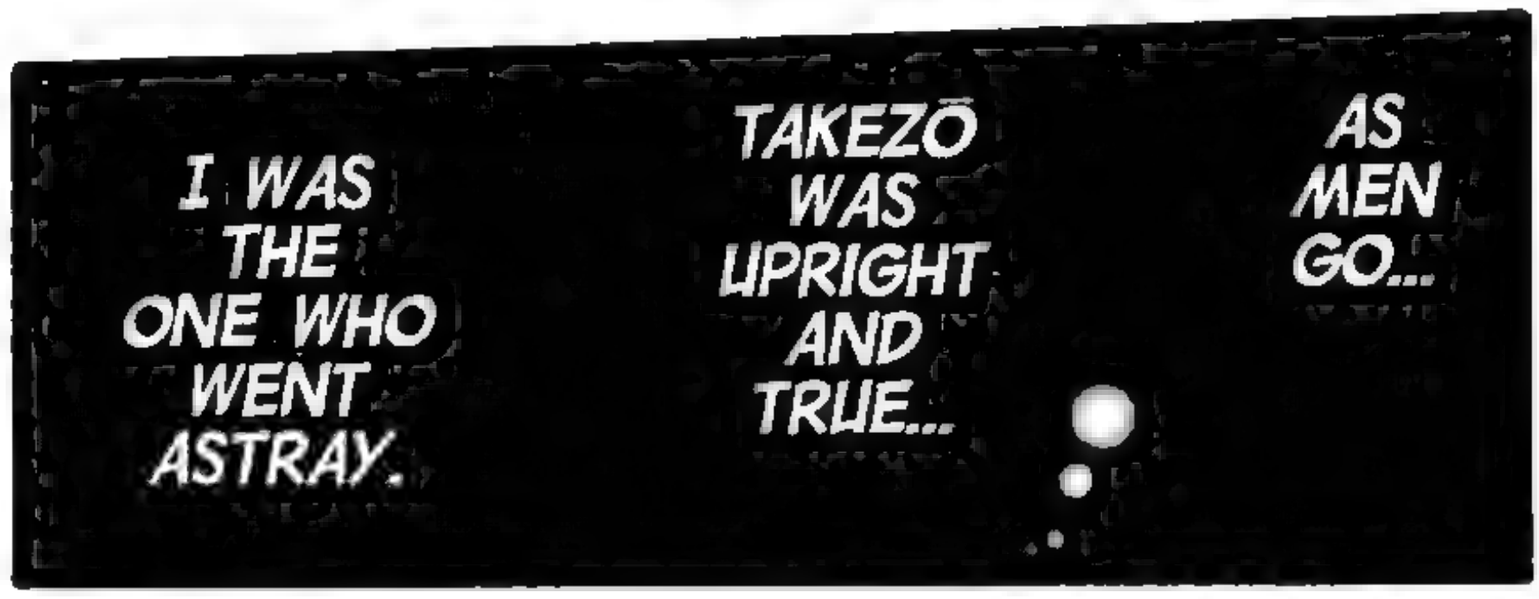
YES.

YOU CAN'T SEE MIMASAKA FROM HERE, BUT THE VIEW IS SPLENDID NEVERTHE-LESS.

CHUF
CHUF
CHUF


CHUF
CHUF

I'M SO SORRY...
IT MUST HAVE BEEN EXHAUST-ING...


I WAS THE ONE WHO WENT ASTRAY.
TAKEZŌ WAS UPRIGHT AND TRUE...
AS MEN GO...

...TO LIVE WITH SUCH HATRED IN YOUR HEART.

SO I NEVER TOLD YOU THE TRUTH.
AND YOUR GRUDGE AGAINST TAKEZŌ HELD.

I DIDN'T WANT YOU TO FIND THAT OUT.
BUT I WAS AFRAID YOU WOULD.

THERE'S ONE THING YOU HID FROM ME TOO.

BUT MOTHER...

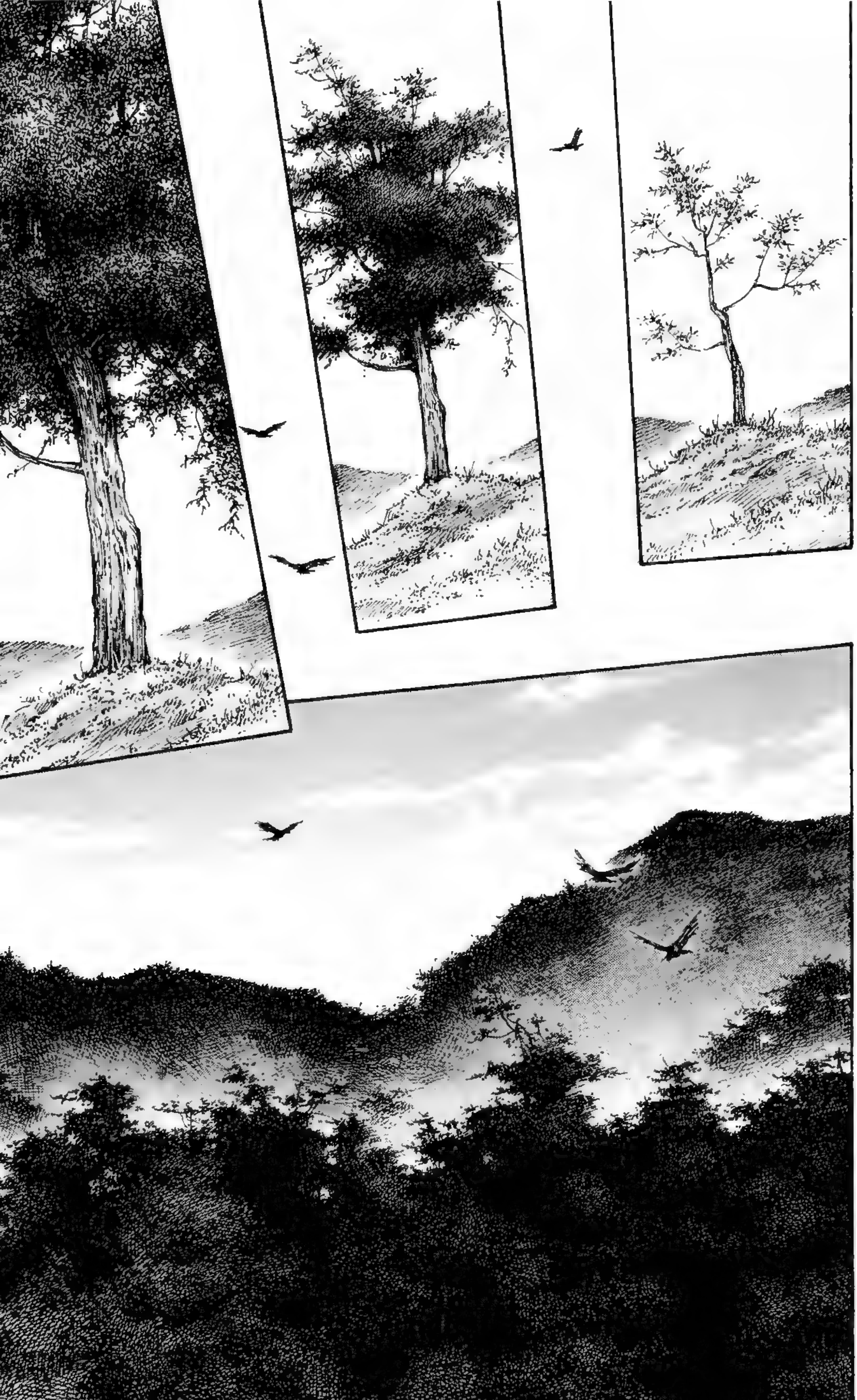
THEN I COULDN'T TELL WHAT WAS REALLY TRUE ANYMORE.

BUT THEN...

SO I NEVER LET ON THAT I KNEW.

BUT I'M A LIAR...

YOU ARE MY MOTHER. ONLY YOU...



AHH...
SNIFF

SNRT

SORRY...

I ALWAYS GET EMOTIONAL AT THIS POINT.

TROOT

SNIFFL

GIVE ME A MOMENT.

.....

WE'VE HEARD ENOUGH ABOUT YOU.

AND GANRYŪ KOJIRŌ?

...SO WHAT ABOUT MUSASHI?

HMPH!

WHAT?!

FWIP

COME ON! TELL US MORE!

THAT'S IT FOR TODAY!

NOPE!

WHAT?!

BUT WE'LL ALL BE BACK TOMOR-ROW.

HE DOES TELL A GOOD STORY.

INDEED.

UNBELIEV-ABLE.

I'LL CONTINUE TOMOR-ROW!

GO HOME!

TP

.....

...HM?

WHEW

IS THAT ALL TRUE?

AND KOJIRŌ?

ABOUT MUSASHI.

IT FEELS GOOD TO TELL THE TRUTH.

I'VE TOLD ENOUGH LIES...

...I'M DONE WITH THEM.

...TOMORROW'S GONNA BE EVEN BETTER.

YOU COMING BACK TOMOR-ROW?

WELL THEN...

.....

NOD

.....

DON'T KNOW WHAT TROUBLES YOU, JUST GET TO BED EARLY TONIGHT.

SLUMP

...TELL US MORE ABOUT MUSASHI, NOT YOU.

WHAT ?!

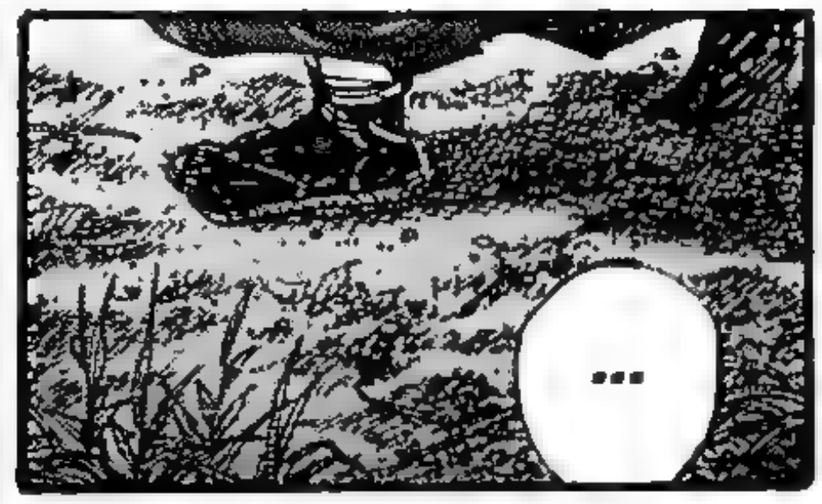
TOMOR-ROW...

UNTIL TOMORROW, THEN...

TWEE
TWEE
TWEE
TWEE
TWEE

TWEE
TWEE
TWEE
TWEE
TWEE

SHUFF
TWEE

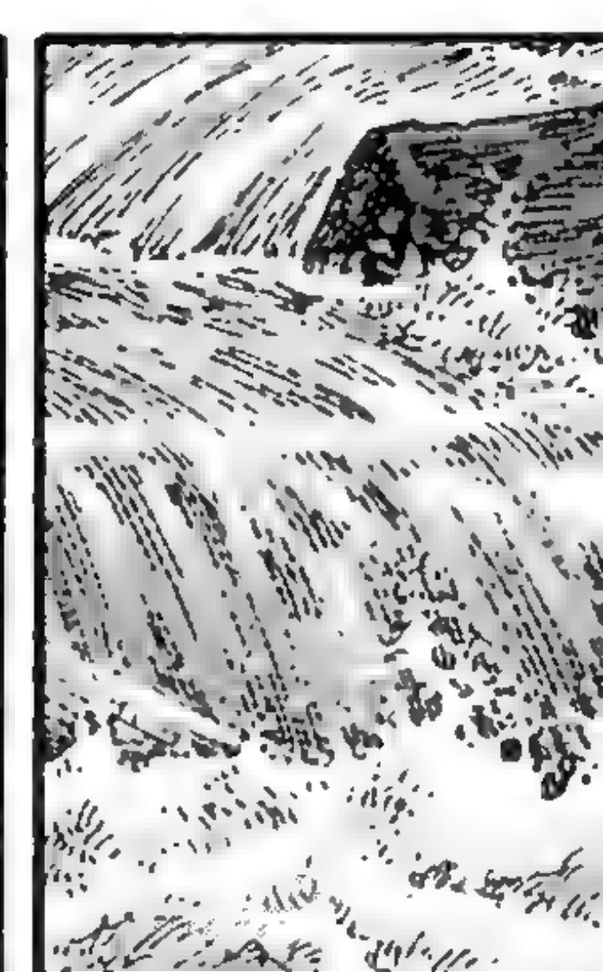

...

SIX TIMES.

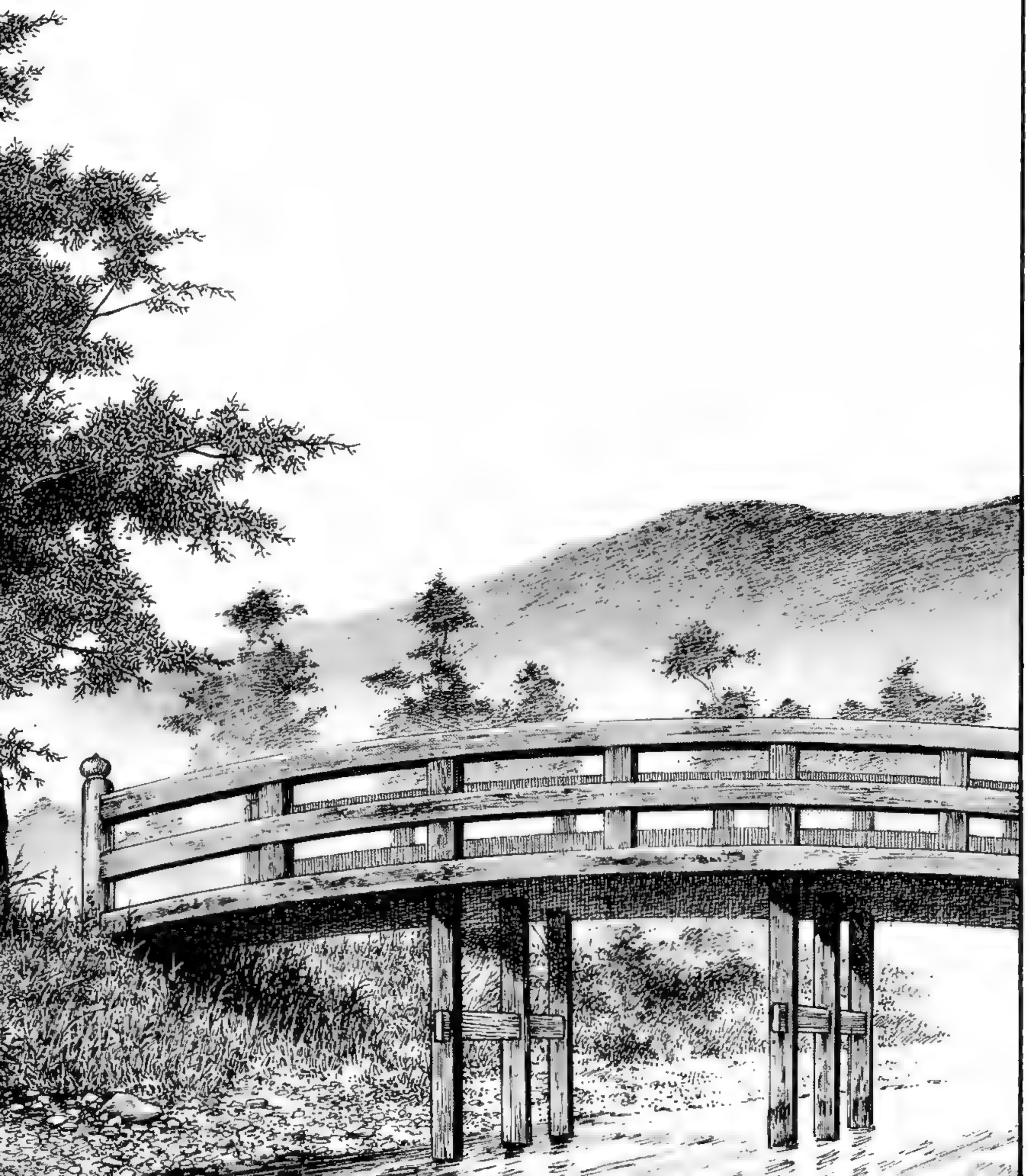
FIVE TIMES ...

I'M ALMOST THERE...

柳生路
(YAGYU ROAD)



#276 Chance Encounter



CHATTER

CHATTER

CHATTER

CHATTER

HUF

HUF

HUF

HUF

HUF

.....

HEY, LET THAT KID THROUGH TO THE FRONT.

OKAY. TODAY I'LL TALK ABOUT MUSASHI.

HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
I REMEMBER YOU!
THAT KID...

FSH
SO YOU'RE MIYAMOTO MUSASHI!

!!

I HEARD YOU TOOK ON 70 OF THE YOSHIOKA ALL BY YOURSELF.

TO PUT YOURSELF IN SUCH A SITUATION...

...JUST TO PROVE THE RIDICULOUS POINT THAT YOU'RE THE BEST...

DIDN'T THINK THERE'D BE ANYONE ELSE AS CRAZY AS ME.

TO THINK THE KID THAT FOUGHT LIKE A BEAST IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE BATTLE OF SEKIGAHARA WOULD EVENTUALLY BECOME MUSASHI...

MAKES SENSE THOUGH!

DON'T YOU REMEMBER ME?

HERE, I'LL AIM THE OTHER WAY.

PLSSSH

I WAS TOO CAUGHT UP IN FIGHTING...

WHO IS HE?

PLISSH

GLAD TO SEE YOU AGAIN! COME OVER HERE!

SHF

I'LL KEEP MY DISTANCE.

I CAN TELL HE'S FORMID-ABLE...

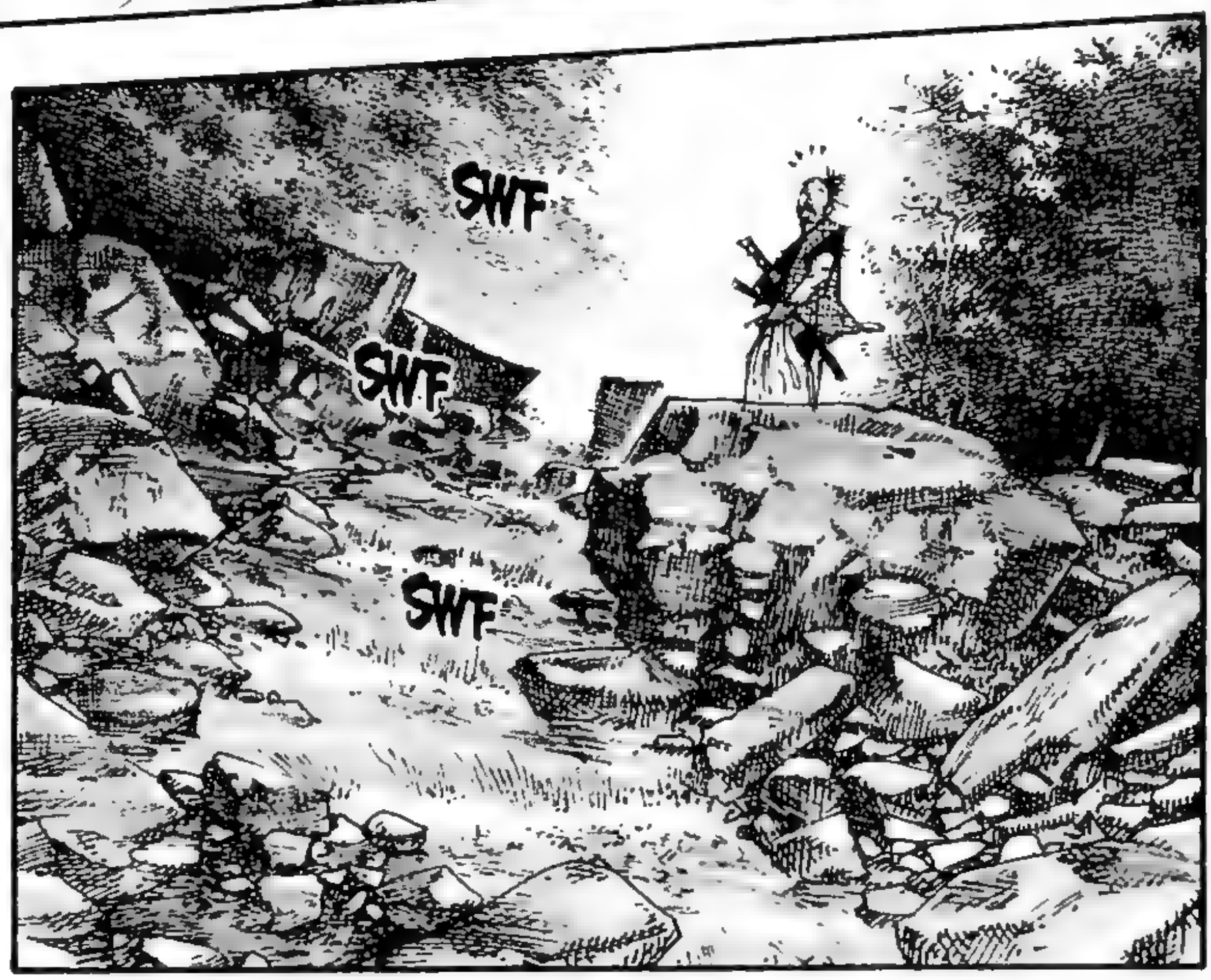
OR PERHAPS SINCE THE OPPORTUNITY PRESENTS ITSELF...

SHAKE

SHAKE

SHALL WE HAVE A DRINK?

WE CAN HAVE SOME FUN?

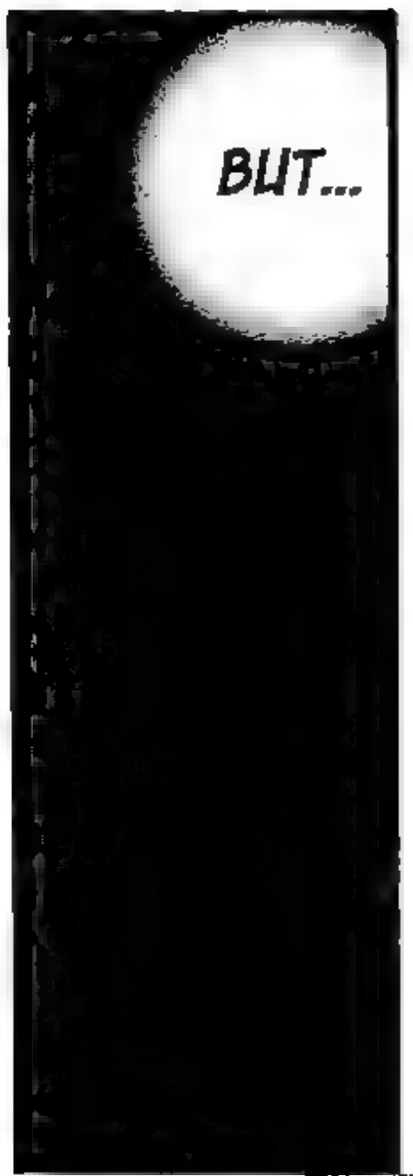


WELL, SORT OF...

I HAVE AN ANSWER FOR MY HOMEWORK.

DO YOU HAVE BUSINESS TO DO AT THE CASTLE?

HOME-WORK?



SAY...

OLD MAN...

WHY THEN DO YOU STILL WIELD THE SWORD?

YOU KNOW, "HRMPH..."

WHY DON'T I SEE YOU WANDERING AROUND IN MY THOUGHTS ANYMORE?

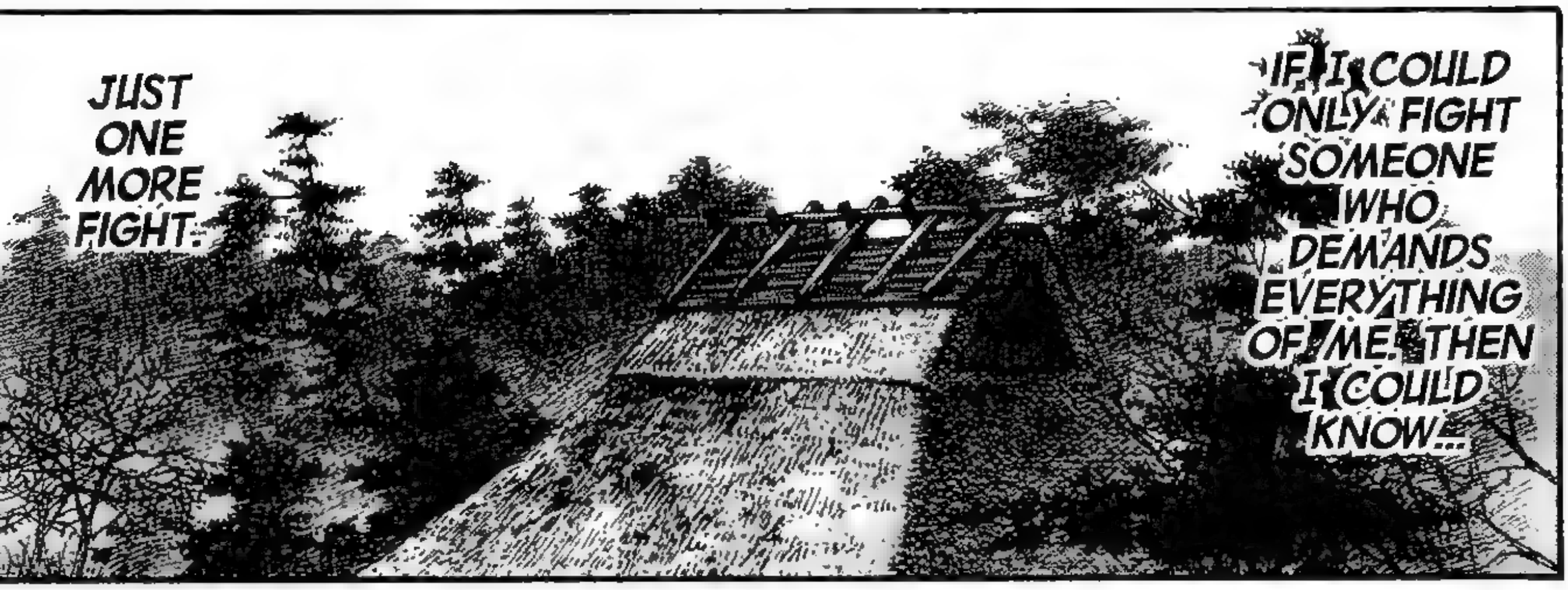
THE PATH YOU'RE TAKING LEADS SOMEWHERE ELSE...

YOU'RE NOT CHASING AFTER A MIRAGE.

THERE'S SOMETHING BEYOND THAT, ISN'T THERE?

AND...

...PERHAPS I'M ALREADY ON THAT PATH...?



SO ARE YOU READY...?
!!

YOU'RE GOING TO THE YAGYŪ, AREN'T YOU?

#277 | Friends

MY NAME IS...

WHO ARE YOU AGAIN?

WAIT...

.....

REALLY ?

ITŌ...

...ITTŌSAI?

SHUF

YOU'RE STILL ALIVE?

OF COURSE I AM!

I'M RIGHT HERE!

BESIDES, I SENSE THAT YOU'RE GOING TO CAUSE TROUBLE.

THE YAGYŪ AND I WON'T BE MEETING FOR THE FIRST TIME...

BUT...I'M NOT GOING TO THE YAGYŪ WITH YOU.

!

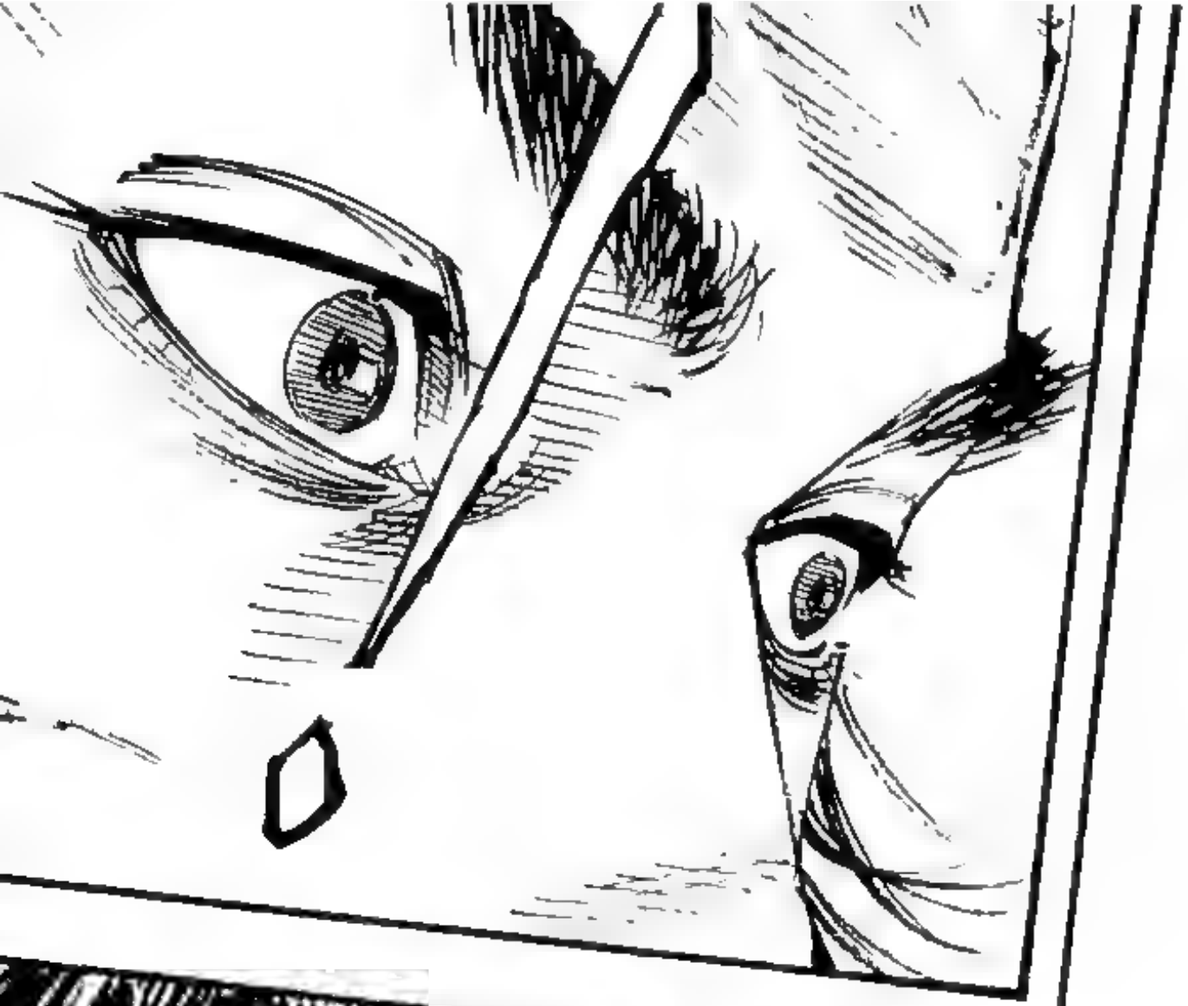
TMP TUMP

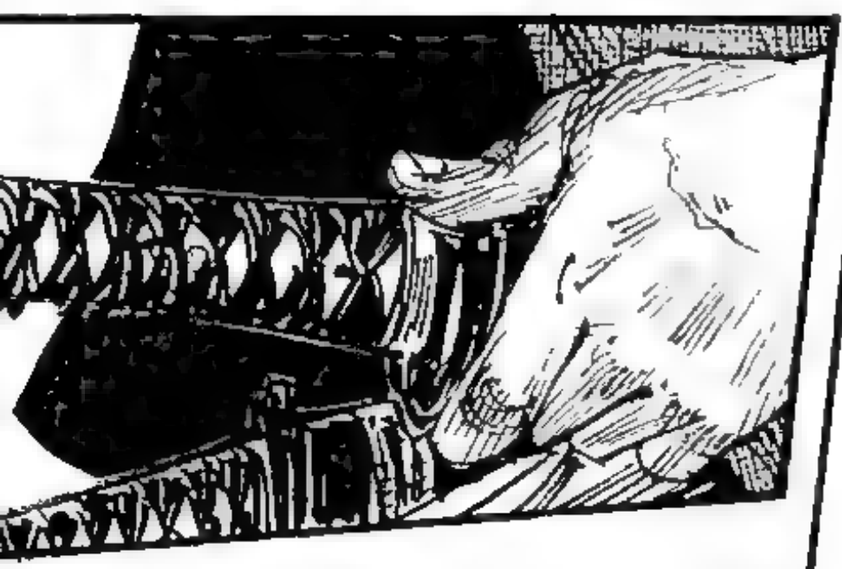
...!

WHY ELSE WOULD YOU BE HERE IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE?

YOU'RE HERE TO FIGHT THE YAGYŪ, RIGHT?

.....





THE "INVIN-CIBLE"...

SHUF

SHUF

...YAGYŪ SEKISHŪSAI IS ALREADY DEAD.

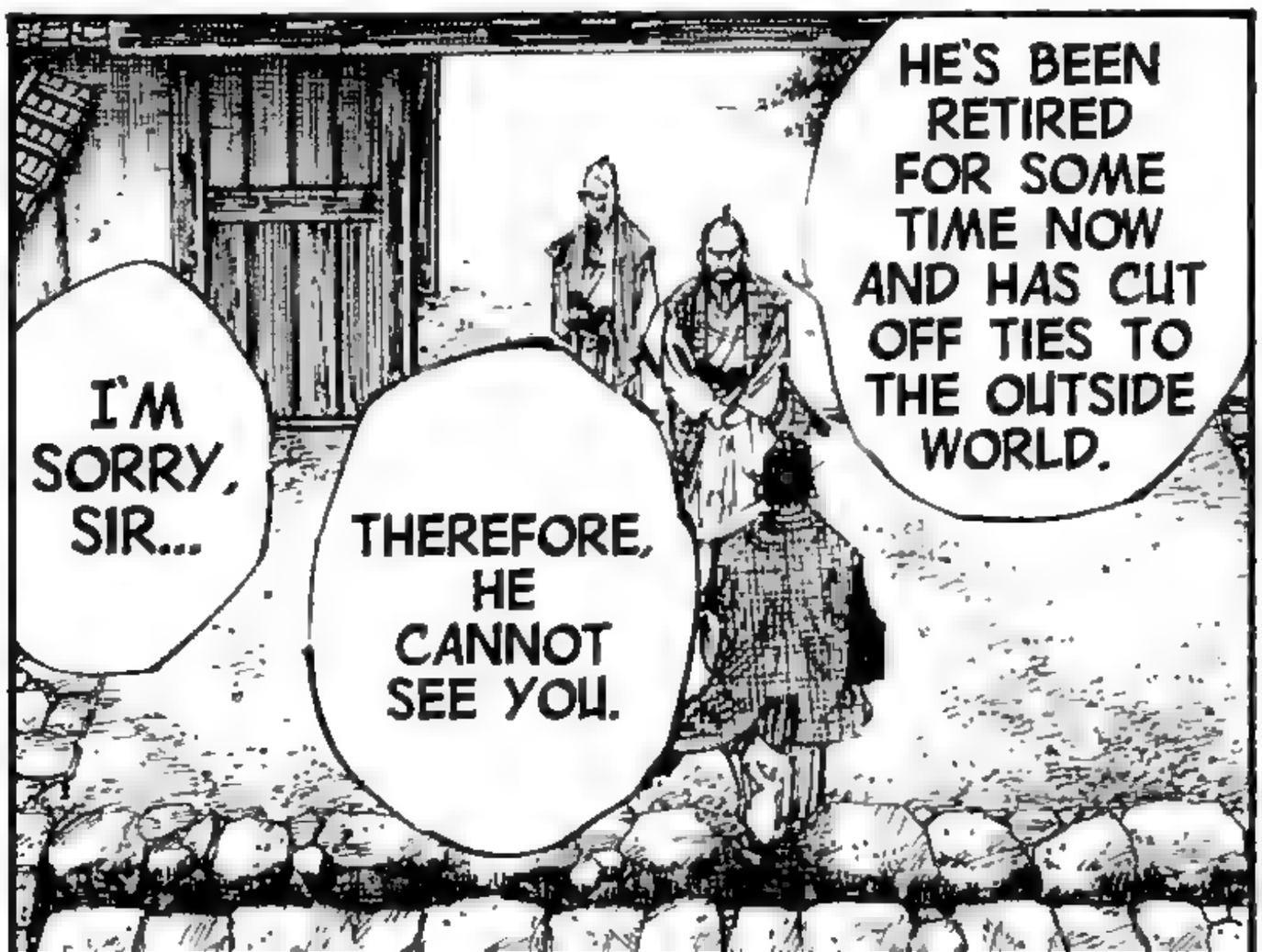
SHUF

SHUF

MAKES THINGS LESS INTERESTING.

DON'T YOU THINK, MUSASHI?

I'M HERE TO SEE YAGYŪ SEKISHŪSAI.



TELL HIM THAT ITTŌSAI IS HERE.
SKRCH SKRCH
.....
I WANTED TO SEE HIM WHILE HE'S STILL AROUND.
WE'VE NEVER MET...
I HEARD HE'S NOT DOING WELL.
ITTŌSAI?
...BUT I'VE ALWAYS CONSIDERED HIM A FRIEND.

YOU LOOK LIKE YOU'RE DOING FINE.
I'M RELIEVED.

ONE WHO IS UNMATCHED UNDER THE HEAVENS...

INVINCIBLE ...?

...DOESN'T EXIST.

I THINK IT'S EITHER YOU OR ME. WHAT DO YOU THINK?

OR PERHAPS...

...IT IS EVERYTHING.

SEE...
...YOU'RE DEAD.

IF WE FOUGHT, I'D WIN.

YOU'D BE DEAD.

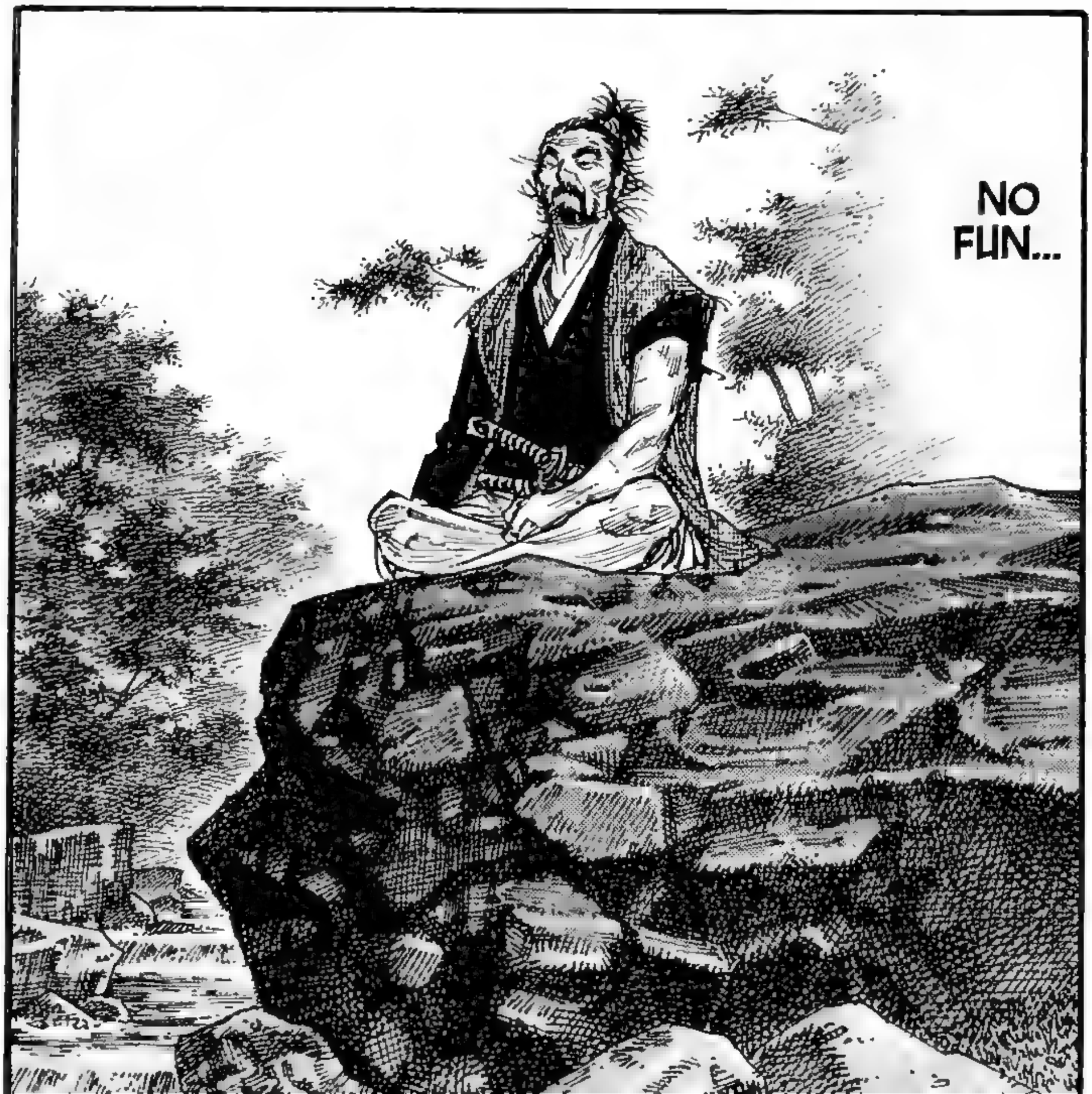
THAT'S RIGHT.

...

JUST AS IF A GIANT BEAR ATTACKED ME.

.....

ZHOOP


NO FUN...

WE COULD FEEL HIS FIGHTING SPIRIT EVEN ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THESE SLIDING DOORS.

THAT ITTŌSAI IS AMAZING.

I'M RELIEVED YOU ARE UNHARMED.

INDEED.

HE REALLY IS "INVINCIBLE."

AMAZING, REALLY.

I'M GLAD I MET HIM.

IN THE END, HE SHOWED ME WHO I AM.

NO FUN AT ALL!

I WANT TO SPEND MY LAST MOMENTS WITH MY HEAD UPON HER LAP.

COME COME, MASTER!

WE'VE SENT SOMEONE FOR HER.

WHAT ABOUT OTSŪ?

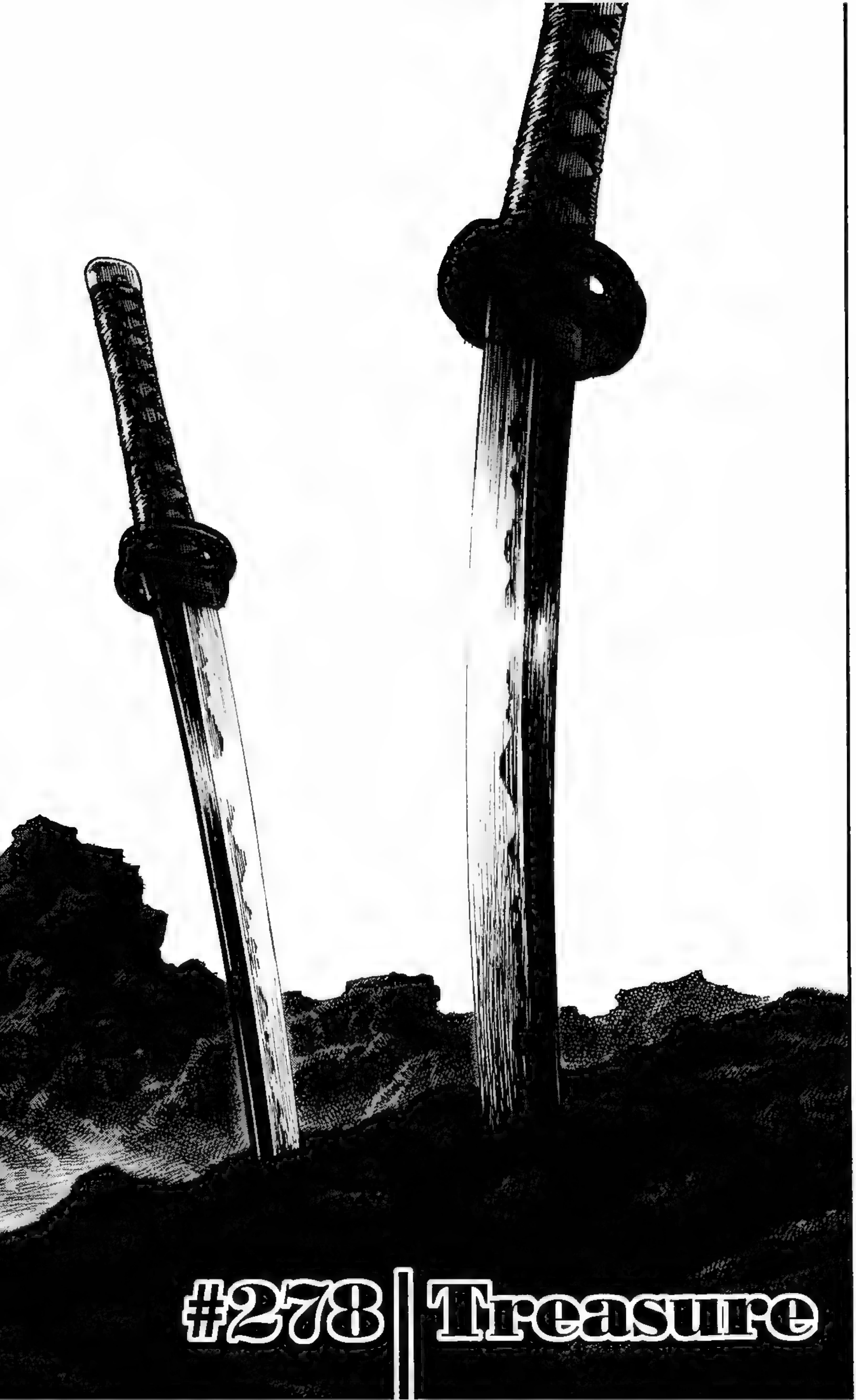
I WANT TO HEAR HER PLAY THE FLUE AGAIN.

CAN'T MEASURE HOW STRONG HE IS.

A MAN LIKE HIM MAY NEVER APPEAR BEFORE ME AGAIN.

THIS MAY BE THE END FOR ME.

MY HEAD ON HER LAP



#278 | Treasure

BECAUSE ONLY SUCH AN OPPONENT CAN DRAW OUT WHAT LIES WITHIN US THAT WE CANNOT SEE.

RIGHT, MUSASHI?

WE SEEK THEM OUT LIKE TREASURES.

HEY... WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?

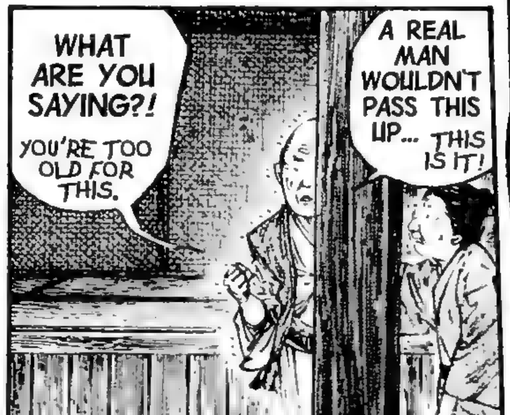
HOW'D IT FEEL TO CUT DOWN 70 MEN?

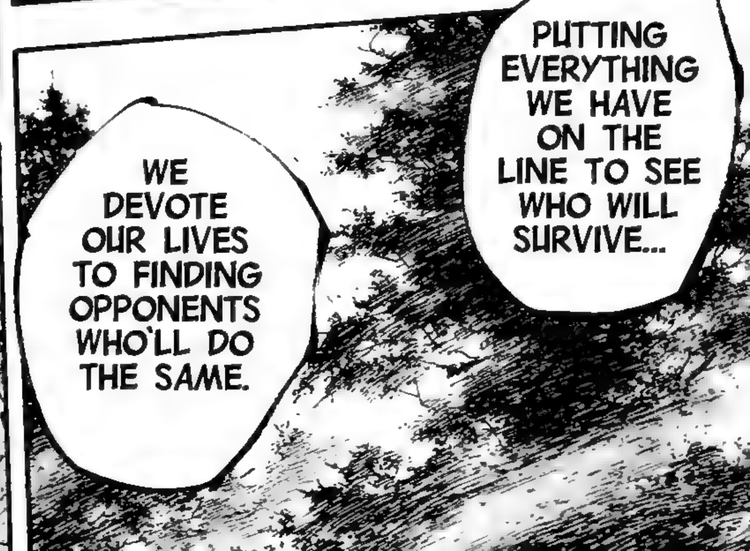
YOU'RE A DEMON.

IT'S BEEN FIVE YEARS...

BUT YOU MUST'VE PACKED TWO DECADES OF EXPERIENCE INTO THAT TIME...

I CAN TELL JUST BY LOOKING AT YOU.





YOU LOOK LIKE A TREASURE TO ME.

A FINE ONE INDEED.

WRSH
WRSH
...
WRSH
ZWSH
WRSH

LET'S DO THIS!

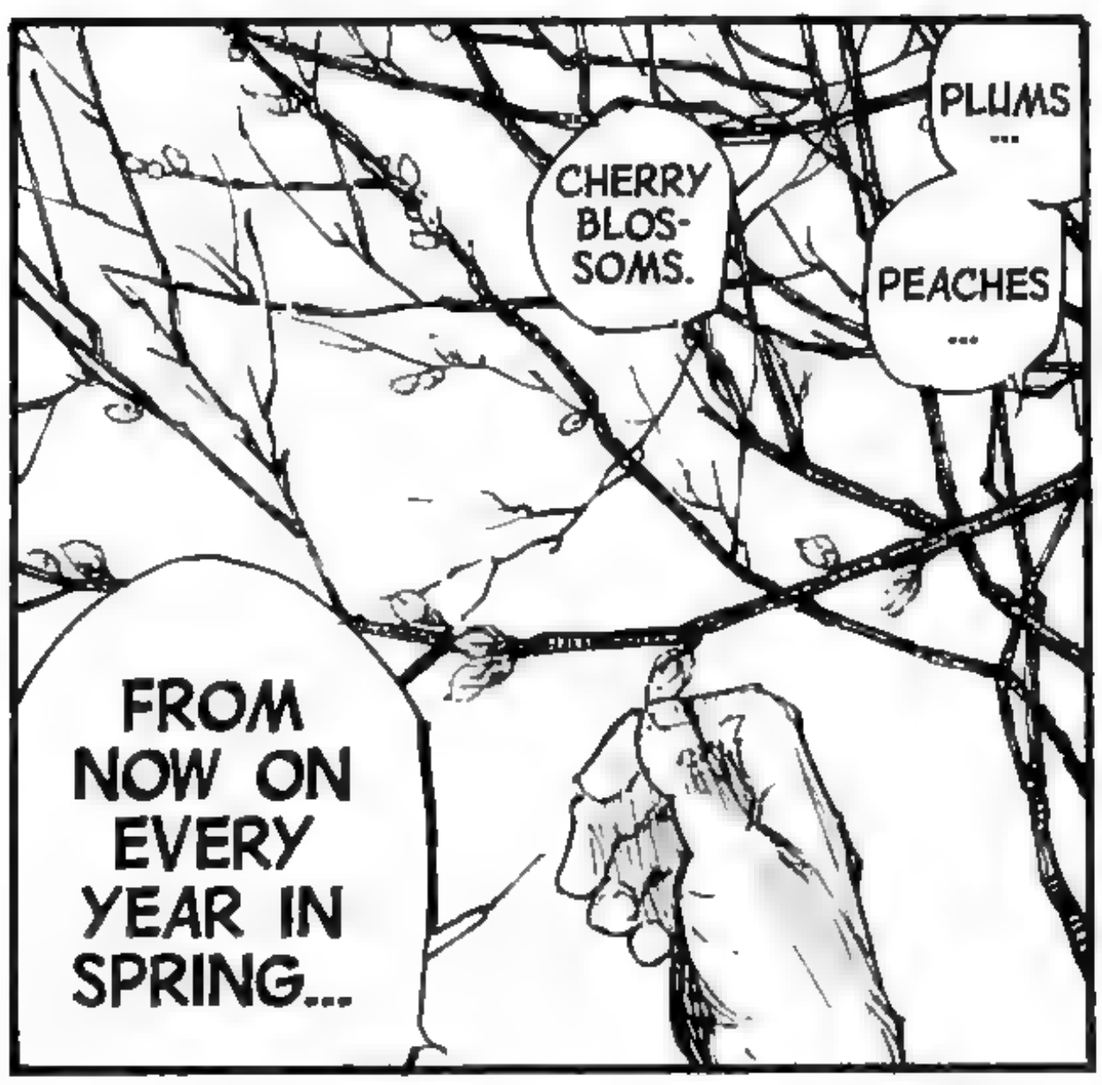
I'VE NEVER MET ANYONE LIKE THIS!

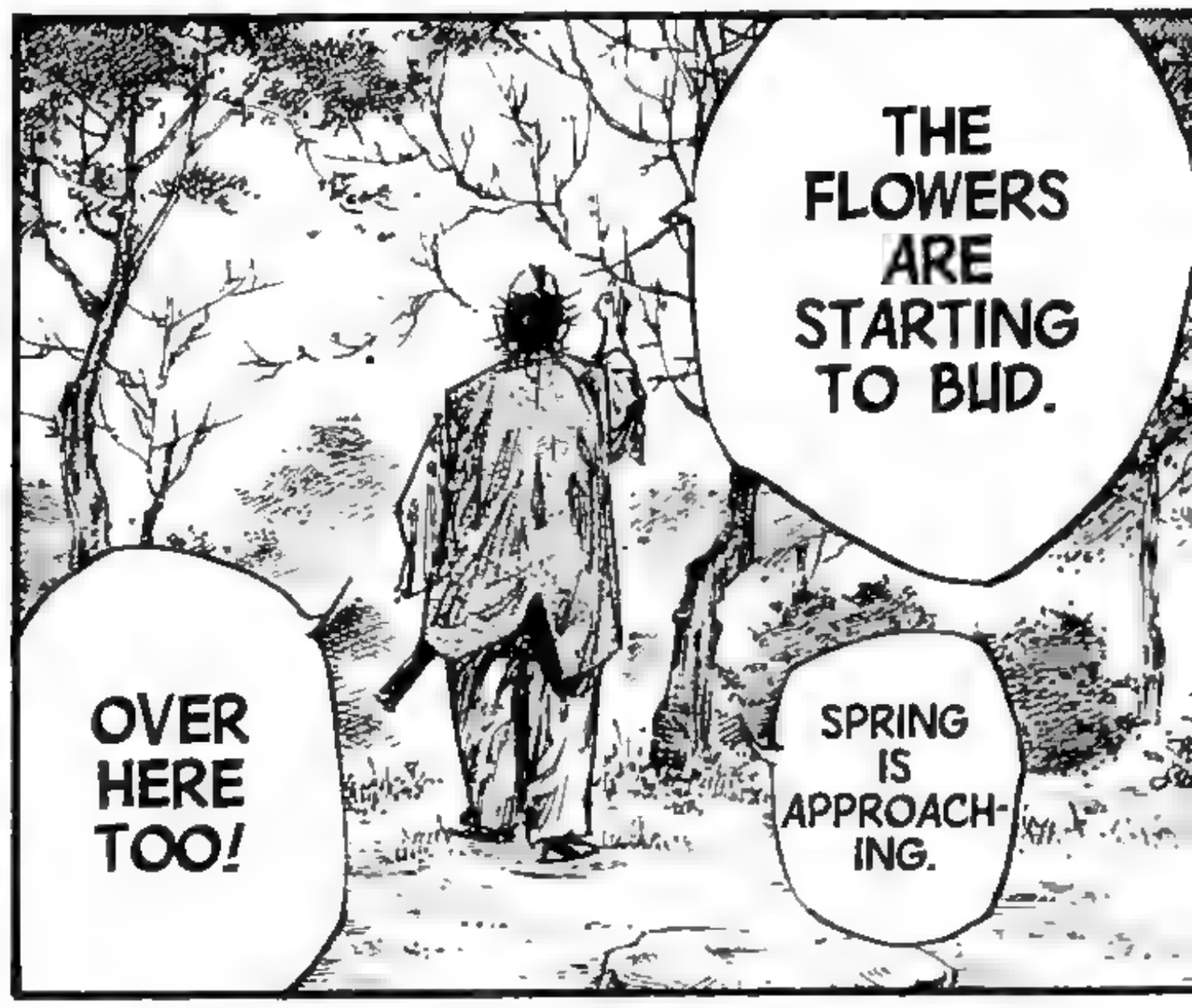
KYAA
.....

.....!!

MAGNIFI-CENT!

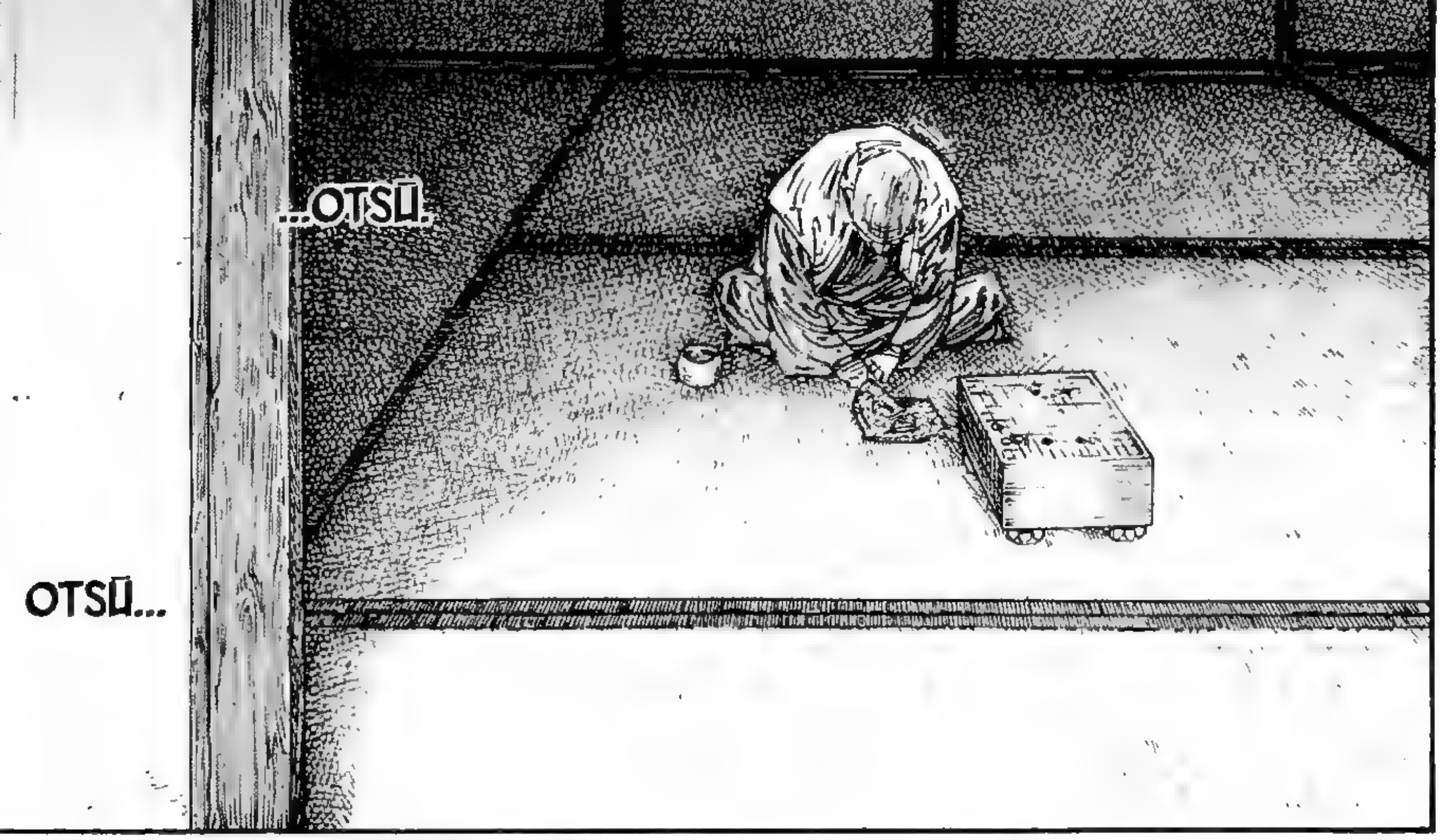
SIR...


CHERRY BLOS-SOMS.
PLUMS ...
PEACHES ...
FROM NOW ON EVERY YEAR IN SPRING...


THE FLOWERS ARE STARTING TO BUD.
OVER HERE TOO!
SPRING IS APPROACH-ING.

SIR...

IT'S SOMETHING TO LOOK FORWARD TO, ISN'T IT, SIR?
HEH HEH
...EVEN FOR A MAN LIKE ME.


...OTSŪ.
OTSŪ...

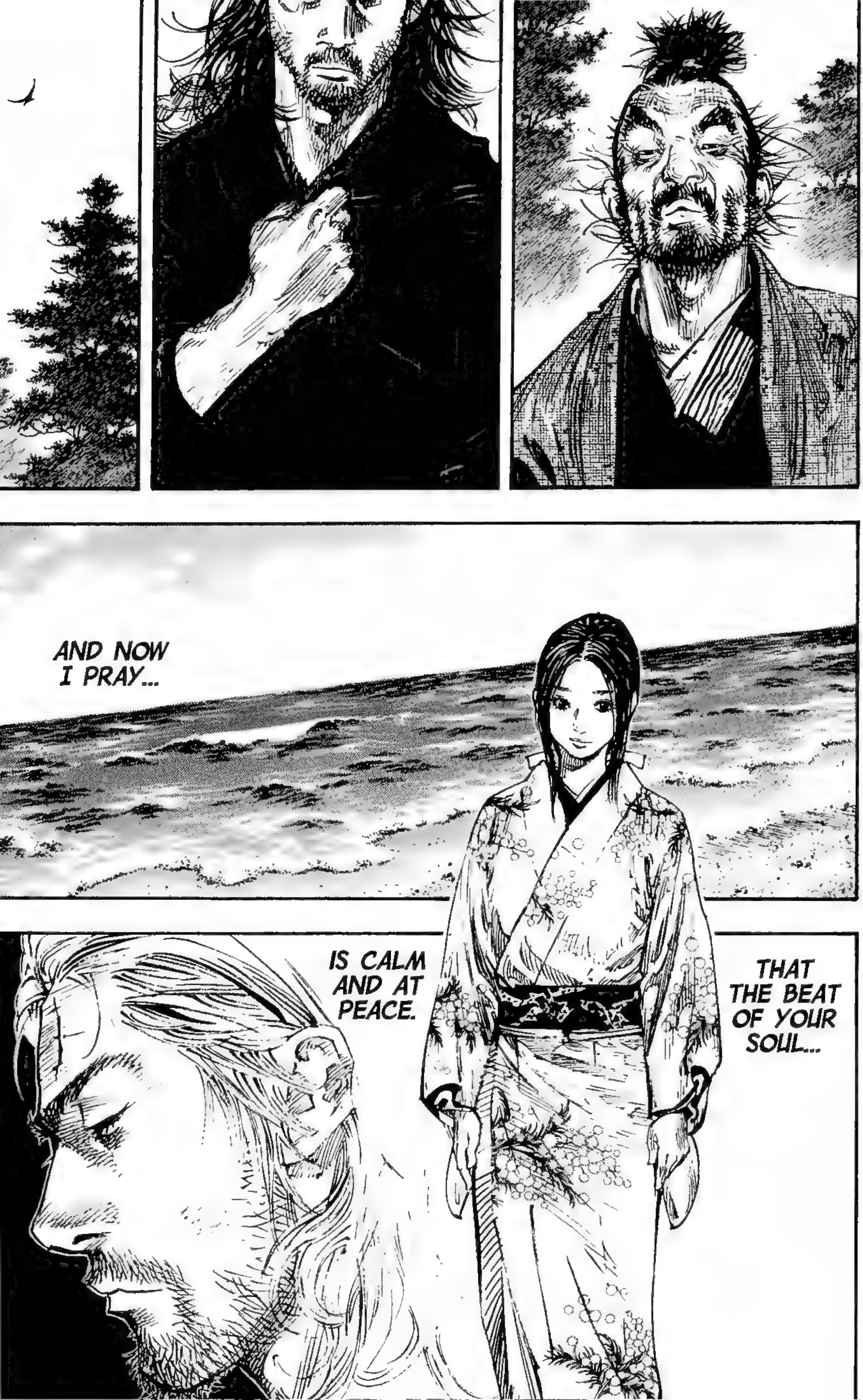
OTSŪ.
WELCOME HOME...

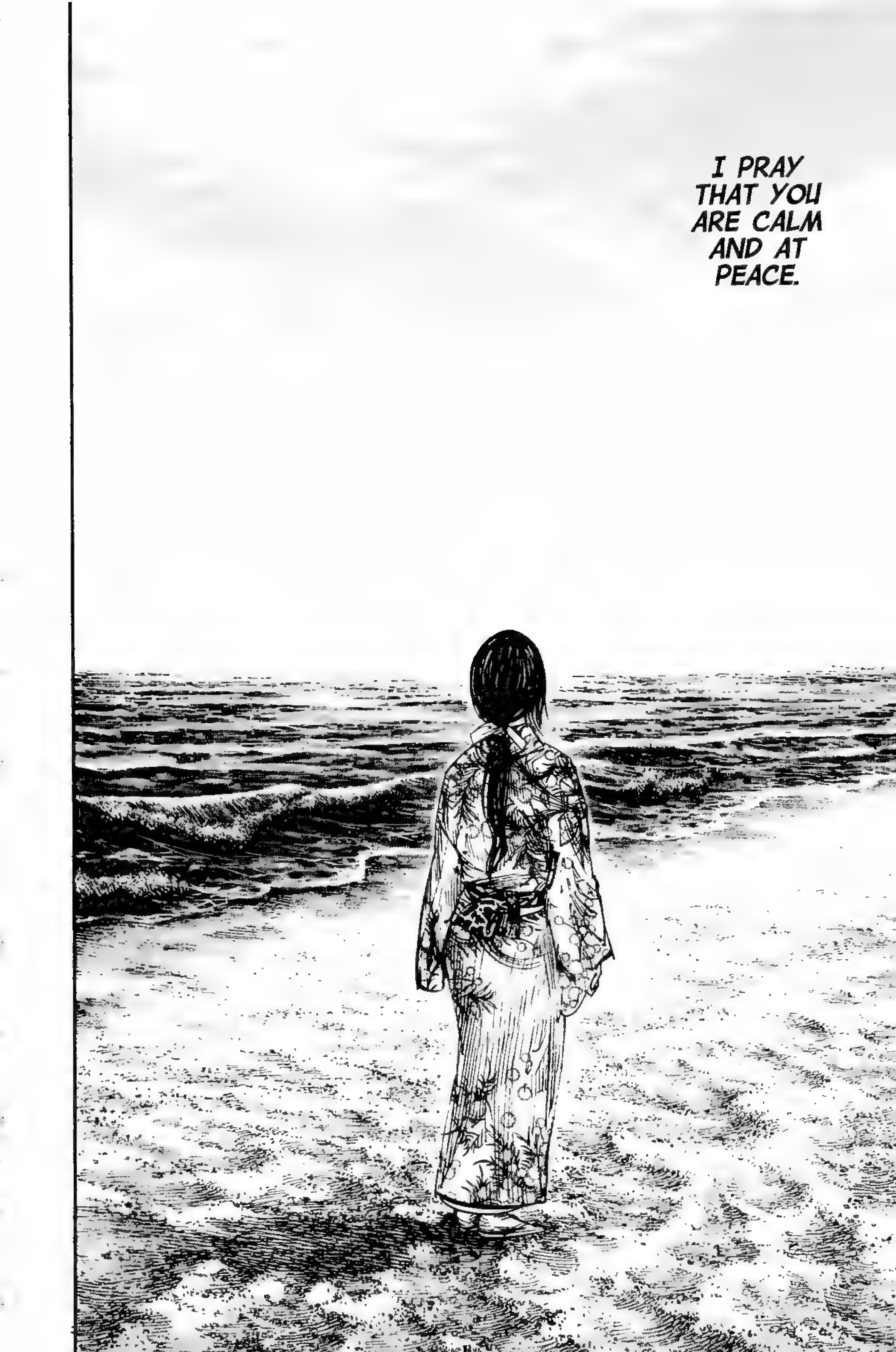
HM?
NO...
HUH?
DID YOU...
...JUST HEAR A FLUTE?
OF COURSE NOT...
HMPH
TWEEEE
TWEEEE
TWEEEE

THE BEAT OF THE SOUL STRUCK BY WAVES...

BATTERED ABOUT, UNSTEADY AND LOST...

YOU FORGET WHO YOU ARE.


AND NOW I PRAY...
IS CALM AND AT PEACE.
THAT THE BEAT OF YOUR SOUL...


I PRAY THAT YOU ARE CALM AND AT PEACE.

SEEMS UNLIKE YOU...
YOU PRAYING?
HEY ...
ARE YOU LETTING THAT GO?

Z
W
S
H

I WON'T CHASE MY OPPONENT.

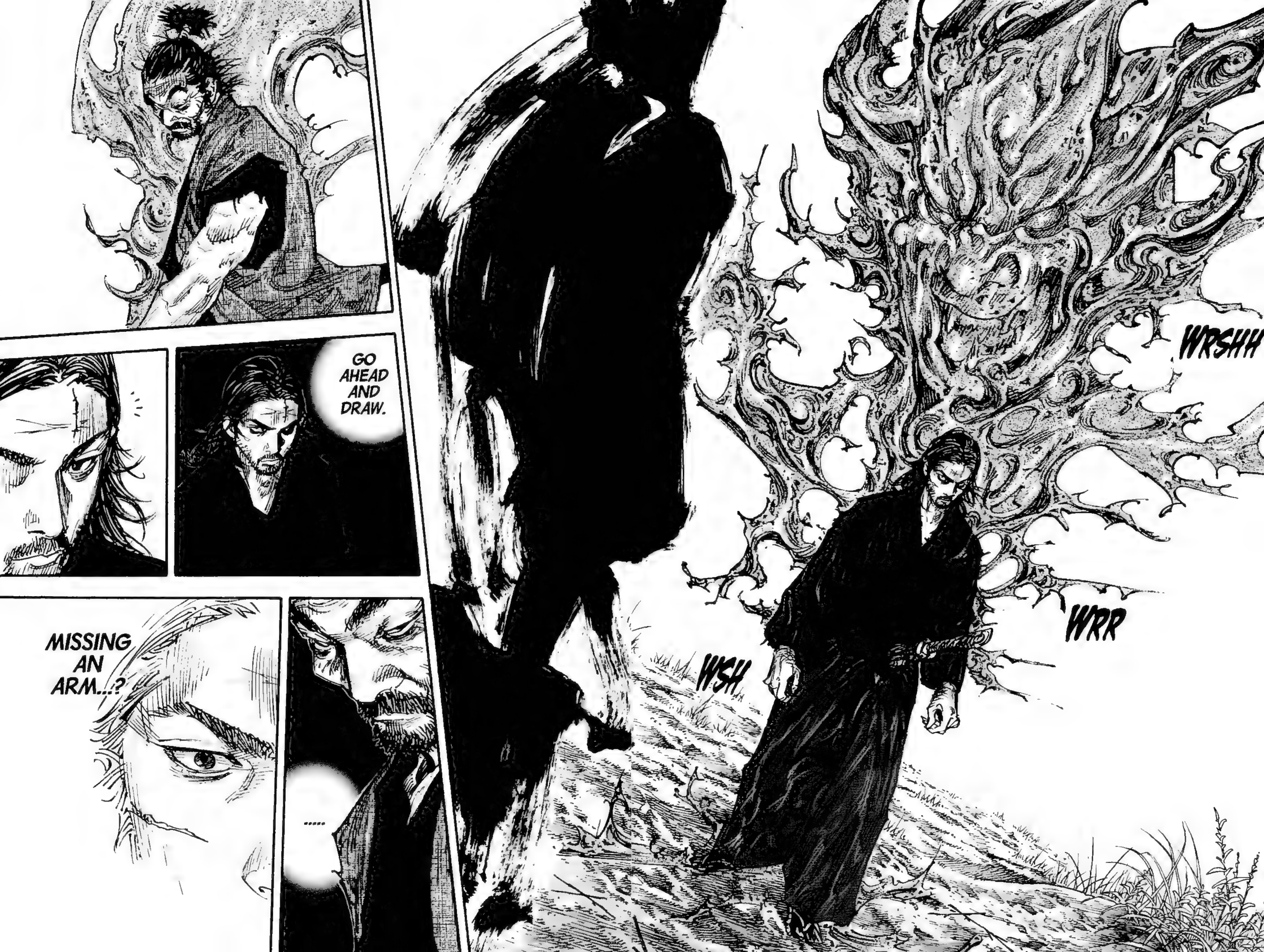
I WON'T LEAVE THIS CIRCLE.
I'M NOT LOOKING TO FIGHT YOU.

.....

BUT I'M NOT GRACIOUS ENOUGH TO GIVE UP MY LIFE TO ANYONE WHO ENTERS HERE.

ARE YOU HEADING TOWARD THE LIGHT...
...OR ARE YOU STILL DRAWN TO THE DARKNESS ...?

I'LL CUT YOU DOWN IF YOU COME AT ME.
THAT'S THE SPIRIT.
YEAH!


GO AHEAD AND DRAW.
MISSING AN ARM...?
.....
WRSHH
WRR
WSH

HE HASN'T SHOWN HIS RIGHT ARM ONCE, ALWAYS KEEPING THE OTHER SIDE FORWARD.
AREN'T YOU GOING TO DRAW?

MAYBE IT'S NOTHING.
OR MAYBE THAT'S WHAT HE WANTS ME TO THINK...
WHY?

DRAW!

Vagabond

End of volume 31